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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Sheep Production in Alberta

BY

DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

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CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	5
Present Status of the Sheep Industry	6
The Place of Sheep on the Alberta Farm	7
Breeds of Sheep	12
Selection of a Breed	23
Selection of Breeding Stock	24
Catching and Handling Sheep	28
Estimating Age by the Teeth	30
Feeding and Management of the Flock during the Breeding Season	32
Winter Feeding and Management	35
Care of Ewes and Lambs during the Lambing Season	42
Methods of Identification	45
Docking	46
Castration	48
Shearing and Handling Fleeces	49
Dipping	51
Summer Feeding and Management	54
Weaning	56
Lamb Feeding	58
Lamb Marketing	61
Sheep Diseases	64
Respiratory	65
Digestive	66
Diseases of the Ewe	69
External Parasites	72
Internal Parasites	73
Miscellaneous	74
Poisons	79
Gestation Table	81

Sheep Production in Alberta

BY

J. E. BOWSTEAD and J. P. SACKVILLE

The sheep industry has always held a relatively important place in the development of agriculture in Canada. In a report submitted by Governor Carleton to the Home Government nearly two hundred years ago, at the time of the French dominion in Canada, mention was made of the importance of the wool industry in the young colony. During the period of early British rule in 1765, it is reported that there were 28,000 sheep in Canada. At the time of Confederation the total number of sheep in the Dominion was estimated at 2,500,000, and up to 1937 the numbers have increased over 800,000.

Alberta stands second among the provinces of Canada in the total number of sheep, being only surpassed by Ontario; the figures for 1937 in Alberta being 768,500 head with a value of approximately $3,566,000. The sheep population in Alberta has increased much faster than cattle during the past ten years, being slightly over fifty per cent., while there has been a decrease of five per cent. in the number of cattle. In the case of hogs, the number has increased less than 5 per cent. during the same period.

While the increase during the past decade in the number of sheep in this Province has been greater than for cattle, in actual numbers they do not compare so favorably. According to the latest statistics available the cattle population of Alberta is double that of sheep. There may be a fairly logical reason for this. So far as the average farmer is concerned, sheep usually follow the pioneering stage and are looked upon as belonging to a more intensive and modified system of farming. It is only logical to assume that with the agricultural development that may be expected in such a young province as Alberta, eventually there will be a corresponding growth in the sheep industry.

The sheep industry in Alberta, in common with all the provinces in the Dominion, has been on quite a satisfactory basis during the past few years. Lamb prices were maintained at a fairly high level, and there was an increasing demand for breeding female stock at satisfactory prices. In spite of the fact that wool prices have been relatively low, there is still a fair demand for breeding stock. A considerable

number of farmers are establishing flocks each year and are at the same time seeking information regarding the feeding and general management of such flocks. This publication is issued at this time with a view to meeting this demand. In the preparation of this bulletin the object has been to keep in mind particularly the needs of the man who has had little or no previous experience with sheep, and the various phases of sheep husbandry are discussed from the viewpoint of the domestic or farm flock rather than that of range sheep.

Present Status of the Sheep Industry

In weighing the question of increased production in any farm product it is necessary to consider the matter of available markets for that particular commodity. In some cases there is the danger that any marked expansion may result in a surplus so large as to unfavorably affect market values. A review of present production, a consideration of domestic and foreign markets, the possibility of the development of future outlets and an analysis of imports and exports are all worthy of study in relation to such a problem. With this in mind an attempt has been made to present in a brief way a few facts and figures that may be of interest. Much of the information contained in the following review was obtained from the Canada Year Book.

According to the most recent figures, sheep in Canada in 1937 numbered slightly under three and one-half million head, valued at $18,741,000. Of this number forty per cent. are found in the three Prairie Provinces and twenty-three per cent. in the Province of Alberta. During the period from 1927 to 1937, there has only been an increase of slightly over two per cent. in sheep population in Canada.

The following table shows the number of sheep in Canada by provinces both for 1927 and 1937:

	1927	1937
Prince Edward Island	89,606	49,600
Nova Scotia	257,215	137,600
New Brunswick	153,057	107,100
Quebec	861,548	658,000
Ontario	956,267	874,700
Manitoba	135,982	216,200
Saskatchewan	170,038	345,000
Alberta	510,000	768,500
British Columbia	128,993	183,200
Total in Canada	3,262,706	3,339,900
Total value	$32,004,000	$18,741,000

It will be noted from the above figures covering the ten-year period that while the total number of sheep in Canada showed

very little change, there was a heavy falling off in the number of sheep in the eastern provinces, while on the other hand, there was a substantial increase in the western provinces. In actual number of sheep, Alberta, amongst the Prairie Provinces, shows the greatest gain during the past ten years.

The slow rate of increase in sheep population in Canada has been sufficient to cause a small exportable surplus. In 1927 Canada had a net importation of .1 per cent. of mutton and lambs slaughtered, while in 1937 Canada had a net importation of .4 per cent. of the mutton and lambs slaughtered. In order to maintain prices in Canada at a profitable level it would not seem advisable to increase the sheep industry to any marked extent unless lamb consumption in Canada can be increased or a profitable export outlet made available.

Canadian people do not consume large quantities of mutton or lamb. In 1937 the average Canadian consumption was only 6.2 lbs. as compared with 58.9 lbs. pork and 62.4 lbs. beef. Taking into consideration the fact that the average Englishman consumes approximately 30 lbs. mutton and lamb, 42 lbs. pork and 69 lbs. beef, it may be possible to induce Canadians to eat more mutton and lamb.

Wool prices dropped in 1929 and reached a low level in 1932 of approximately 5 cents per pound. Since then prices have been gradually rising, but have not reached the 1929 level of 20 cents per pound. Canadian woollen mills use much more wool than is produced in the Dominion. In 1937 Canada imported 2.4 times the amount of raw wool produced and used in Canada. In addition to this there was imported into Canada processed wool and manufactured woollen goods to the value of $23,675,349.

Based on available figures for 1937, the income from the sale of mutton and lamb was over three times the income from wool. It is, therefore, evident that the profitableness of the sheep industry is dependent more on mutton and lamb prices than on wool prices.

The above facts are presented to show the status of the sheep industry in Canada and in Alberta. They have a direct bearing on the whole question of expansion of the sheep industry in this province, and may very well be kept in mind in connection with the succeeding section of this publication.

The Place of Sheep on the Alberta Farm

It is reasonable to expect increased numbers of sheep in Alberta as numbers are reduced in the eastern provinces. The expansion in Alberta, however, should not be too rapid and could only be recommended when the market conditions war-

Fig. 1.—Land unsuitable for cultivation can be profitably utilized by sheep.

Courtesy of Alberta Department of Agriculture.

rant such increase in numbers. Many sections of Alberta can lay claim to extensive areas of land, suitable for sheep production, that are as yet not fully stocked. This applies particularly to the southeastern portion of the province where considerable open range is still available. In addition, "special areas" that have reverted to the Crown are being regrassed and made suitable for ranching.

Probably the greatest opportunity for expansion in the sheep business in Alberta, however, is in connection with the establishment of small farm flocks, not only in the recognized mixed farming districts, but also in those sections where wheat growing has been the major farm enterprise.

In addition to the fact that natural conditions of soil and climate are favorable to sheep raising in most districts in Alberta, there are additional reasons why sheep should have a place on more of the smaller farms in the province. While it is true that the scavenging qualities of sheep may be overemphasized, at the same time it must be recognized that as a means of utilizing the vegetation on waste places, summerfallow, and stubble fields, the sheep have an advantage over

other classes of farm animals. The farm flock will graze the summerfallow before and after plowing, glean the stubble fields after harvesting, as well as make possible a modified system of crop production; they will assist materially in controlling some of the more pernicious weeds and at the same time yield a substantial annual revenue. That the flock will return a tidy revenue and help to keep the farm clean is not a mere conjecture. One needs only to consider the enthusiasm of farmers who own flocks of varying sizes to appreciate that they constitute a vital part of the general farm scheme.

The farm flock produces an income from two sources, one from the sale of wool and another from the sale of lambs and culled ewes. During years of average feed and wool prices, the returns from the sale of wool are usually sufficient to cover a fair portion of the cost of feeding during the winter. Quick returns are secured in the case of marketable lambs, since these may be marketed within ten months after the ewes have been bred.

A large capital investment is not required in order to become established in the sheep business. More mature animals can be purchased with a given amount of money than is the case with other classes of live stock, and, next to swine, the increase in numbers is greater. This means that with a comparatively small initial outlay it is possible in a few years to establish a reasonable sized farm flock.

The introduction of sheep as part of the farm enterprise will necessarily mean the providing of proper facilities and equipment for handling this particular class of live stock. The one feature presenting any serious financial problem is that of fencing. The flock not properly fenced is likely to prove a nuisance within the farm and may easily be more or less of a worry to one's neighbors. Fencing with woven wire is the most satisfactory in well settled mixed farming areas. While the initial investment in a suitable sheep fence may at first sight appear to be a rather serious question, at the same time when the cost of fencing is spread over the natural lifetime of a good fence, the situation is not so grave. In other words, the annual fencing charge against the flock is not sufficient to seriously affect the financial showing. While it may be necessary to construct permanent fences in order to pasture certain fields, a considerable reduction in fencing charges may be affected by the use of movable or temporary fences whenever possible. The use of temporary fences has the additional advantage of making it possible to utilize areas not otherwise available for sheep.

Losses from coyotes and dogs present in many cases more or less of a problem in connection with keeping sheep. Good

fences help to diminsh losses in this connection, but the fact remains that, regardless of this, coyotes and dogs are taking too large a toll from sheep flocks in Alberta each year. It may be necessary in order to prevent these losses to provide corrals well fenced with woven wire into which the sheep may be penned during the night. Laws have been enacted to enable sheep owners to collect damages from the owners of dogs that maim and kill sheep, but to catch or shoot the dog or to prove the guilt is not always a simple matter.

The shelter required for sheep need not be expensive. Dry, well ventilated quarters that will protect the flock from winter storms are the main features to be kept in mind in providing shelters. Observations made in connection with the sheep flock on the University Farm over a period of several years have shown that provided sheep are kept on high dry ground they will make little or no use of shelter, except during a stormy period, even though the tempreature may drop considerably below zero. It is true, of course, that when the policy is followed of having ewes drop lambs during the winter some provision in the way of warmer quarters may be necessary.

Fig. 2.—Sheep shelters need not be expensive.

While it is a fact that during most seasons of the year comparatively little attention need be given the flock, they do require some detailed supervision at certain times. This is particularly true during the lambing season, and to a more or less extent at weaning and breeding times. During the lambing season complications and difficulties of various kinds may develop which must receive prompt and proper attention.

When the farmer possesses a natural aptitude for sheep, the greatest success in sheep raising will be obtained. Kindness, cleanliness, regularity and the ability to sense the needs of the flock are essentials. Greatest success and maximum profits are

secured only when everything is done to promote the thrift and comfort of the flock. The individual who has a natural fondness for other classes of livestock may feel reasonably assured that he will readily acquire the ability to care for and handle sheep.

In the case of the farmer who has had little or no experience with sheep and who has only a limited capital, the suggestion would be to start with a small flock and develop the business as finances, experience and general conditions will warrant. It may be expected that there will be an increase in the number of sheep on Albrta farms, but this should come in the form of a substantial growth rather than as a speculative venture.

BREEDS OF SHEEP

Oxford Down.

The Oxford is one of the largest of the Down breeds, mature rams reaching a weight of 300 pounds and over, while ewes weigh around 200 pounds. There has been some considerable improvement in the Oxford breed within recent years. Best specimens of the breed are reasonably low set and measure up fairly well from the standpoint of mutton type. On the other hand, due to their greater weight together with a tendency to mature somewhat slowly, they do not produce as desirable lamb either in weight or finish as some of the other Down breeds. Oxfords produce a fairly heavy fleece, from 3 to 4 inches in length, and usually grades low staple. The wool covering on the head comes down to a point in line with the eyes; the color of ears and face varies from a light to a dark brown. Oxfords are prolific and good mothers. A number of good flocks of this particular breed are found in Alberta.

Fig. 3.—Champion Oxford ram at Chicago International Live Stock Exposition, 1927.

Hampshire Down.

This is one of the most popular breeds of sheep in Alberta. They are medium in size, rams attaining a weight of 250 to 300 pounds, ewes reaching 175 pounds or more. Combined with reasonable weight, they are fairly low set, blocky and compact with good strength of bone. The fleece weight will average around 8 pounds and should grade medium to low medium staple. The wool covering on the head extends a little lower than is the case with Oxfords and covers the cheeks. The ear is quite large and varies from a dark brown to almost a black in color, and the same is true with the face and legs.

Hampshire ewes are prolific and good milkers. Occasionally trouble is experienced at lambing time due to the fact that the young lambs are inclined to have large heads.

Hampshires and their crosses produce a satisfactory market lamb as they mature and finish at a desirable weight and yield a carcass well developed in the high priced cuts.

Fig. 4.—Hampshire ram bred and owned by the University of Alberta. A show ram and sire of many prize winners.

Shropshire.

The Shropshire is classified among the Down breeds. Sheep of this breed are medium in size, mature rams weighing 175 to 200 pounds and ewes 140 to 180 pounds. They are low set with compact, smoothly turned, symmetrical bodies. The wool measures from 2½ to 3 inches in length and usually grades medium staple. The wool covering of the head is quite distinct, as it extends over the ear and face, leaving only the tip of the nose clear. The ear is quite small and covered with light brown hair or wool. This breed is early maturing and produces a lamb carcass that is well fleshed in the high priced cuts and of a desirable weight.

The heavily wooled head, especially around the eyes, is a handicap when Shropshires are exposed to winter storms or when attacked by dogs or coyotes. This breed makes the best showing where feed conditions are favorable, especially when at pasture when it is not necessary to travel too great distances. They are not as widely distributed in Alberta as some of the other Down breeds.

Fig. 5.—Champion Shropshire ewe at Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Toronto, 1927.

Suffolk Down.

Another of the medium wool breeds, about equal to Hampshires in weight. They are a thick bodied, fleshy, low set breed, especially full in the leg, and the meat is regarded as fine grained and of good quality. The wool covering is not extensive, the head and legs from knee and hocks down are free from wool and are inclined to be bare of wool on the belly. The wool is only medium in length, fair in compactness and quality, and sometimes lacking in fleece weight, grading low medium staple with the occasional medium staple.

Suffolks are hardy, active and good travellers, which makes them well adapted for Western Canadian conditions. They are early maturing, the lambs reaching market weight and desirable finish to qualify for the present day demand. Suffolk ewes make excellent mothers, being good milkers and prolific.

Southdowns.

A few Southdown flocks have been established in Alberta recently. They are the smallest of the Down breeds, mature rams weighing 175 to 225 pounds, and the ewes 125 to 160 pounds. They are low-set, fine boned with a short neck and short, broad compact body, well turned and heavily fleshed

Fig. 6.—Southdown yearling ram. Bred and exhibited by Robert McEwen and Sons, London, Ont.

throughout, especially in regions of higher priced cuts. From a carcass standpoint the Southdown is an ideal mutton breed, possessing the ideal proportions and meat of finest texture. Wool extends well down the legs and over the cheeks and forehead. It yields a fairly short, fine wool, grading fine medium to medium staple. Fleece average between 5 and 8 pounds.

Southdown lambs are noted for their fattening qualities, becoming well finished at an early age and at a weight of between 60 and 70 pounds. Due to this fact they may be held over for a more favorable market without injuring the quality of carcass or becoming overweight. This characteristic as well as their superior mutton qualities, has led to the use of Southdown rams for crossing with ewes of other breeds, where the aim is to produce early maturing lambs or for the production of hot house lambs.

Ewes of this breed are not regarded as being prolific or as good milkers as some of the larger breeds, though they make good mothers.

Dorset Horn.

Comparatively few Dorset Horn sheep are found in Alberta. They are of fair size, similar to the Hampshire or

Fig. 7.—Champion Dorset ewe at Chicago International Live Stock Exposition, 1927.

Suffolk in this regard, but do not show quite the mutton quality or conformation of these breeds. Both sexes are horned and the hair on face and legs is white or light grey. The Dorset Horn does not shear a heavy fleece, but the wool is of fair quality. The Dorset Horn is one of the most prolific breeds of sheep for the reason that it is possible to produce two crops of lambs each year.

In districts near large markets sheepmen make use of the Dorset Horn ewes for the production of hothouse lambs by mating them with Southdowns, Shropshires and, to a lesser extent, rams of the other Down breeds. The crossbreds possess many of the mutton characteristics and properties of the ram and are desirable lambs for the butcher trade.

Cheviot.

The Cheviot is one of the most stylish and attractive breeds of sheep. Their alert appearance, white color, black nose and hoofs, body carriage, and general outline make this breed one that is admired. Mature rams weigh 175 to 200 pounds and ewes 125 to 160 pounds. The ewe produces a fleece of medium weight, averaging 5 to 8 pounds, of fair quality, usually grading fine medium staple.

Fig. 8.—Champion Cheviot ewe at Chicago International Live Stock Exposition, 1927.

Cheviots are noted for their length of life, prolificacy, hardiness and low mortality of lambs. Cheviot lambs are usually strong and vigorous at birth, which accounts for their low mortality. They are not as rapid maturing as are most of the Down breeds.

Corriedale.

The Corriedale breed is one of more recent origin, developed mainly in New Zealand, from a cross of Lincoln rams and Merino ewes. Their size, hardiness, gregariousness and mutton qualities have led to their more extensive use in range flocks in the United States and more recently in western Canada. The wool quality of the Corriedale, due to the Merino blood, is much superior to the Down breeds. They are medium in size, fairly free of wool on the head, and their superiority to the finer wooled breeds with respect to mutton type has accounted for their growing popularity in range breeding.

Fig. 9.—Champion Corriedale ram at Chicago International Live Stock Exposition, 1927. Bred and exhibited by King Bros. Co., Laramie, Wyoming.

Fig. 10.—Champion C Type Rambouillet ram at the American Royal, 1927. Bred and exhibited by King Bros. Co., Laramie, Wyoming.

Rambouillet.

This breed has been developed in France and is of Spanish origin. Through careful selection the size and weight, quality of fleece, mutton qualities and hardiness, were all improved. In size the Rambouillet is only moderate, rams weighing approximately 225 pounds at maturity and the ewes 150 to 160 pounds. The head is usually reasonably free of wool, not extending below the eyes, while the ears and bare portion of the face is covered with fine white hair or short, fine wool. The rams usually have large spirally turned horns, although some males may be hornless, and the females are hornless. The fleece is compact, should be from 2½ to 3 inches in length, of excellent quality, showing good crimp and lustre, and produces a fleece weighing 10 pounds or more. The hardiness, banding instinct and longevity of the Rambouillet makes them particularly well adapted for range conditions, and for this reason they are the predominant breed maintained in the range area of western Canada. They lack somewhat in ideal mutton qualities, may possibly be criticized for lack of size and length of wool staple, which has led to the use of some of the mutton breeds for crossing on some of the range flocks.

Leicester.

This breed is found more extensively in eastern Canada than west of the Great Lakes. It is a breed of fair size, rams weighing from 200 to 275 pounds, and ewes 175 pounds and over. They have a broad well fleshed back and loin, well turned body, with a fair leg of mutton. Compared with some other breeds they appear upstanding. The wool extends to the hocks and knees and forward to the head leaving the head and lower legs bare. The wool is long, measuring 7 to 8 inches, and is fairly coarse, usually grading low staple to common and braid. The fleece average 8 to 10 pounds in weight. It is an open fleece unsuitable to animals that are liable to exposure or extreme cold. For this reason Leicesters are not as desirable as some of the other breeds for use on the open ranges, but can be successfully raised when suitable shelters are provided.

Leicesters are good foragers and fatten readily under liberal feeding. The Leicesters have been found excptionally good for the productoin of crossbreds, the lambs carrying the fattening qualities, size, and fleece weight of the Leicester as well as the quality of fleece and meat of the Down or other breeds with superior mutton and wool qualities.

Fig. 11.—Champion Leicester ram. Bred and exhibited by G. B. Armstrong, Teeswater, Ont.

Cotswold.

This breed is one of the larger breeds of long wooled sheep, mature rams weighing 250 to 300 pounds and ewes 175 to 225 pounds. They are strong in bone, with a broad, strong top similar to the Leicester. Their wool attains the length of from 8 to 12 inches and is coarser, grading common and braid. The wool has a tendency to part down the back permitting cold rains and low temperatures to penetrate.

Cotswold ewes are prolific, good milkers and make good mothers. They are said to be somewhat low in carcass quality and do not mature as early as those of the Down breeds. There is also a tendency in the case of the young lambs to lack vitality.

Fig. 12.—Champion Cotswold ram at Chicago International Live Stock Exposition, 1927.

Rams have been successfully used on range ewes for the purpose of increasing the size of lambs and weight of fleece.

Lincoln.

The Lincoln is the largest breed of sheep, rams usually weighing about 300 pounds, and ewes 200 to 275 pounds. They possess a heavy frame, with good breadth of back, similar to the other long wooled breeds. The wool is long, usually 12

inches in length, grading common and braid with a fleece weight averaging around 15 pounds. The other characteristics and properties are similar to that of the Cotswold. Lincoln rams have been used successfully on range ewes to increase the weight of fleece and size of ewe flock.

Romney.

The Romney breed is smaller than the Cotswold and Lincolns. The conformation is similar to the Leicester, Lincoln and Cotswold except that the Romney is slightly lower

Fig. 13.—Approved type of English Romney.

set. The wool, however, is shorter, denser and finest of all the long wooled breeds, usually grading low staple. They have better mutton qualities than the Lincolns and Cotswold. Having been developed in low marshy districts, Romney sheep are better adapted to low lying lands and are less subject to foot rot than are most other breeds. These superior qualities have led to the Romney breed being popular in New Zealand, Australia and South America for use in crossing with their Merino and Rambouillet range ewes. On the ranges of the United States and Canada, Romney sheep are being used to a limited extent.

Karakul.

The Karakul breed originated in Asia. As no flock records or pedigrees are kept, the purity of the present day Karakuls is unknown. There is a great variation in type and skins. Karakuls are considered fur bearing animals, the pelts of the lambs being called Karakul, Persian, Astrakhan and several other names. Suitable pelts have been secured by the mating of ewes of the long wooled breeds with Karakul rams.

Fig. 14.—Typical Karakul ram.

The Karakul is of little value comparatively for mutton. Pelts have the highest value when Karakul lambs are one to three days of age. The breed is adapted to extreme temperatures and high altitudes, and do not do well in moist sections and low altitudes.

SELECTION OF A BREED

At least two fundamental features must be kept in mind in connection with the selection of any breed of livestock. Firstly, they should be acceptable from the standpoint of modern day market demands, and secondly, in order to be profitable from the standpoint of economical production they

should be of approved type which suggests that they must necessarily be well adapted for the conditions under which they are maintained.

The Down breeds, for the most part, conform quite well to the first requirement. Oxford Down, as has already been pointed out, do not qualify quite as well in this respect. On the other hand, the Southdown lacks the size and weight for age as compared to the other breeds in this class. The Shropshire is recognized as an excellent mutton sheep with a fleece and skin of good quality. At the same time, the heavy wool covering over the face, together with the fact that they are comparatively short in the leg, suggests that they may be regarded as being more suitable for smaller areas with abundant pastures rather than under conditions where pastures are relatively sparse.

The larger breeds, characterized by longer wooled and more open fleeces, have disadvantages as far as western Canada's climate is concerned.

The Hampshire and Suffolk breeds, medium in size, satisfactory from the viewpoint of early maturity and fleshing qualities, reasonably hardy and active, fit into Western environment quite well. Both of these breeds, however, are inclined to have dark fibred wool, and Suffolks are criticized for bareness of belly wool. Both of these weaknesses may be overcome by more careful selection.

SELECTION OF BREEDING STOCK

The proper selection of breeding stock is one of the most important factors making for success in sheep raising. No improvement is possible without intelligent choice of both rams and ewes, based on a careful study of the characteristics of the existing flock, and the ideals, or ambitions of the breeder, as developed through an understanding of market trends and conditions.

The Selection of the Ram

The ram has been demonstrated to represent one-half, or in some cases, even more than half of the flock. If the ram is not superior to the ewe flock, the lambs produced will not be an improvement on their mothers and consequently no progress will be made from year to year. If, on the other hand, the ram is superior to the ewe flock, the lambs produced should show improvement over the ewes. Since ewe lambs replace the older ewes each year, the improvement of the flock from year to year is only secured by the use of carefully selected rams.

In purebred flocks the selection of the ram is based upon breed type, as well as mutton type. It is essential in these flocks to maintain uniformity in breed type and correct mutton type. In grade flocks the rams are selected chiefly for mutton type and quality, though conformity to a certain breed type which is secured by the continued use of rams of the same breeding, leads to a desirable uniformity in the market lambs with consequent higher prices.

In the selection of a mutton ram the points to be considered should be as follows:

1. **Breed Type:** Breed type is of considerable importance especially in selecting a ram to head a purebred flock. Uniformity of type in both purebred and grade flocks should be the aim of every breeder. This can only be secured by the continued selection of rams possessing the recognized characteristics of the breed to which they belong.

2. **Masculinity:** As shown by vigor and boldness, that are indicated by full, bright eyes, large nostrils, broad head, short thick neck, and well developed forequarters.

3. **Mutton conformation and quality:** Rams of the mutton breeds should be low set, with sufficient bone, and a broad, well turned thickly and firmly fleshed body from brisket to dock. The hind legs should be well fleshed, with a deep full twist and flank. The skin should be pink and the fleece long, fine and dense, and characteristic of the breed to which he belongs.

The ram should not be heavily fitted since a ram carrying too much flesh is frequently a slow breeder and sometimes fails to "settle" ewes until he becomes normal in flesh and vitality.

4. **Size:** This depends upon the breed and age of ram being selected. No under-sized ram should be selected as lack of size is liable to result in slower maturing lambs than is desired.

5. **Age:** Immature rams are not as efficient for breeding purposes as mature rams. Inability to serve ewes, or disregard for ewes in season, often occurs when immature rams are used. It is possible, however, to select a suitable ram lamb of the early maturing breeds, dropped early in the season, i.e., January, February or March, with sufficient size and vitality to successfully serve a small flock of ewes. Since the future development of ram lambs cannot be predicted with as great accuracy as older rams, mature rams should be given a preference in selection.

Selection of Breeding Ewes

The quality of lambs and profits that will be derived from the sheep raising enterprise in the first, as well as succeeding

Fig. 15.—A breeding ewe should show fair size and conform to the lowest thick mutton type.

seasons, are largely dependent upon the selection of foundation ewes and ewe lambs that will compose the future flock. It is fundamental for the beginner as well as for the experienced breeder, that the selection of foundation ewes for the establishment of the flock, and of ewe lambs to replace discarded ewes, should be intelligently made. Through the use of good sires and the retention of the best ewe lambs, considerable progress may be made in the course of four or five years.

As in the selection of rams, breeding ewes should be selected upon their conformity to ideal mutton type, and if purebreds, to breed type also. The chief characteristics that should be looked for in making a selection of ewes for improved mutton qualities are as follows:

1. **Age:** Ewe lambs are of necessity selected for the replacement of discarded ewes. The owner necessarily speculates on their future development, and has to maintain them in his flock for a year before they are old enough to breed. Some effort should be made to select the ewe lambs that are out of the better type of ewe. Yearling ewes are regarded as the ideal from the standpoint of age, because their reproductive life has just begun. Their future development does not have to be predicted, and they are usually sound in udder and teeth. There is less speculation attached to the buying of yearlings than with ewes of any other age. Ewes, two years or older, if selected for foundation stock, cannot be depended upon to reproduce as long as yearlings. Among the older ewes offered for sale may be found those that, for some reason

other than broken mouths, unsound udders, and lack of development, have been unprofitable to the owner.

2. **General appearance:** Breeding ewes should be well grown, healthy, and active. Undersized, unthrifty ewes should not be selected, as they are likely to produce slow maturing, undersized lambs. Good health is indicated by an active, sprightly appearance, a bright clean pink skin (sometimes occasional dark skinned individuals are found in the dark faced breeds), bright eyes, and by a fleece that is clean, lustrous, and containing plenty of yolk. Poor health may be recognized by emaciation, chronic coughing, a pale skin, dry harsh wool and scouring. Such ewes should not be selected for foundation stock. Emaciation, however, may be due to the ewe suckling lambs, insufficient feed, as well as internal parasites.

The ewes should conform to the desired mutton type. They should be fairly low set, with broad, deep and capacious bodies, carried uniformly throughout — indicating feeding capacity and plenty of space for the embryonic development of the lamb. Such ewes will also usually have plenty of milk to nourish their young. Avoid the selection of upstanding, narrow chested, shallow bodied ewes for, as a rule, they are poor feeders, and a disappointment as reproducers and milkers.

3. **Soundness of teeth and udder:** Without a full set of sound teeth breeding ewes cannot be expected to handle sufficient feed to nourish the unborn or suckling lambs and maintain their own bodies. Ewes with "broken mouths" should be avoided in selecting foundation stock, as their ability to reproduce and nourish lambs has been lowered through their difficulty in consuming food.

Occasionally ewes offered for sale have udders which through accident or disease are unable to produce milk, or so blemished that milk cannot be drawn from the udder. Such ewes will be unable to nourish their lambs and therefore only ewes with sound, functional udders should be selected.

4. **Fleece:** Some consideration should be given to the fleece in the selection of ewes. Fleeces not only provide a source of income to the owner, but they should also provide sufficient protection against cold rains and low temperatures normally experienced in Alberta. A fine fibred, compact fleece, of fair length, extending well over the body and especially the belly, provides ample protection and yields a fair income.

CATCHING AND HANDLING SHEEP

The use of correct methods for catching and handling sheep is important, not only to prevent waste of energy and time, but also to prevent injury and discomfort to the animals.

When animals are corralled in a small pen, catching can be most effectively done by grasping the flank, as less struggling on the part of the animal is experienced. In the field the use of a shepherd's crook can be recommended. There is a tendency on the part of inexperienced sheepmen to grasp the animal by the wool. This is a careless practice, often causing serious bruises, and should be discouraged.

A sheep is most easily led by holding the neck of the animal with one hand and pressing the end of the dock with the other. Pulling by the head or neck causes the animal to struggle and resist being led.

When sheep are to be placed on their rump for shearing, feet trimming, or any other purpose, the left arm should be placed around the front of the animal and the right hand passed under the body and grasping the hind leg on the far side as shown in the accompanying picture. By pulling steadily

Fig. 16.—Sheep can be most effectively caught by grasping the flank.

on the leg and raising the forepart of the body the animal is most easily brought to the desired position.

A well trained sheep dog can be used to advantage in facilitating the handling of sheep, especially in large flocks. On the other hand, a poorly trained dog may cause considerable worry to the flock and trouble to the shepherd.

Fig. 17.—The proper way to grasp a sheep to set it on its rump

Fig. 18.—The simplest way to guide sheep.

Fig. 19.—Sheep cannot be moved easily when grasped in this manner.

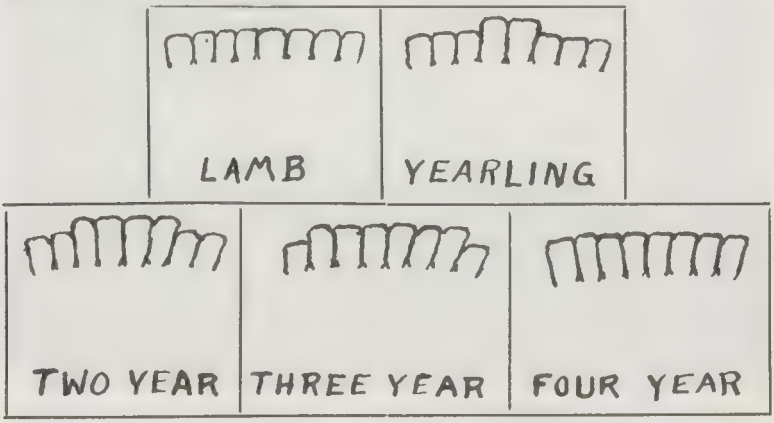
ESTIMATING AGE BY THE TEETH

The age of sheep up to four years can be easily determined by examining the teeth. The mouths of sheep are equipped with a full set of twenty-four molar teeth on both upper and lower jaws, for the mastication and grinding of food. In addition to these, four pair (eight) of incisor teeth are provided along the front of the lower jaw, which together with the lips and upper gum, enable the sheep to gather and cut off each mouthful of food. The incisor teeth have been called "nippers," which in itself describes their use. It is the incisor teeth that are examined to determine age.

At about three weeks of age lambs usually possess a full set of eight incisor "milk teeth." These are smaller and narrower than the permanent incisors. At the age of twelve or fifteen months the center pair of "milk teeth" are lost and replaced by two permanent incisors which can be readily determined by their size. Permanent incisors are longer and broader than the "milk teeth."

Each succeeding year an additional pair of "milk teeth" are replaced by permanent ones in regular order, so that when sheep are four years of age a full set of eight permanent incisors will be found. Sheep with one pair of permanent incisors are one year old; two pairs of incisors, two years old; three pair of incisors, three years old; and four pair, four years of age or older. The time at which these changes take place varies with the condition under which the sheep have been kept. With well fed sheep the changes take place slightly earlier than with animals not kept in good condition.

The following illustration indicates how the teeth of sheep appear at different ages.



After four years of age there is a tendency for the teeth either to wear down until they become like stumps, or loosen and fall out. It is therefore impossible to tell exactly the age of sheep after they are four years of age. If one or more incisors are missing in mature animals, they are called "broken mouthed," or if all incisors are missing the term "gummer" is given them.

Sheep that have been well cared for and properly fed will often maintain a full mouth until they are seven, eight or even nine years of age, while range sheep or poorly cared for sheep that have suffered many periods of food shortage and exposure to severe weather, begin to lose their teeth at five or six years of age. As soon as ewes become "broken mouthed" their usefulness is much impaired.

FEEDING AND MANAGEMENT OF THE FLOCK DURING THE BREEDING SEASON

Feeding

The breeding season for sheep is normally in the fall and early winter months. It occurs during a season when ewes may be in a thin and unthrifty condition due to scant pastures and following a more or less strenuous suckling period. When ewes are in such a condition at breeding time there is a tendency toward the production of a small, unthrifty lamb crop and a lengthening of the breeding season due to some ewes failing to conceive at one or more services. Experience and experiments have proven that such results can be overcome by the feeding of suitable rations during the breeding season.

The term "flushing" has been given to the feeding practice which has for its purpose an increase in the thrift of the ewes and as a result a more satisfactory lamb crop. The necessity for flushing and the response secured depends upon the condition of the ewe and also on the condition of the pasture and feeds fed prior to the breeding season. It is in the case of the thinner, more unthrifty ewes that the greatest effects of flushing will be secured.

The providing of succulent pasture just prior to and during the breeding season is regarded as the most suitable, as well as the most economical method of flushing. This, however, necessitates early breeding under Alberta conditions, and can therefore only be recommended for farmers with equipment to handle lambs under January, February and March conditions.

Rape pasture has for several years given excellent results at the University of Alberta during the breeding season of purebred ewes. Grouping all ewes of five different breeds together during a four year period the following number of lambs per ewe were dropped:

2 year olds	1.71	lambs	per	ewe
3 year olds	1.90	"	"	"
4 year olds	2.04	"	"	"
5 year olds	1.93	"	"	"
6 year olds	1.78	"	"	"

Although not all of the lambs represented by the above figures were raised, it does indicate the benefit which can be secured by the use of a succulent pasture during the breeding season.

No data are available on the comparative merits of the various pasture crops for flushing, but it is logical to assume

that there would be very little difference between the various pastures, provided they furnish an abundance of fresh succulent feed throughout the breeding period.

On most farms, however, the breeding season is usually in November and December, when pastures are not available and the flock is under winter feeding conditions. Flushing may be satisfactorily accomplished under these conditions by the use of grain together with a good quality of hay. The feeds should be nutritious and provide the necessary constituents for reproduction and flesh building. Feeding carbonaceous rations would not prove as suitable as rations that furnish a fair amount of nitrogenous feeds. For this reason, the addition of alfalfa and sweet clover hays, bran or linseed oil meal would improve the ration. When twins or triplets are born, it is not uncommon for one of the lambs to be small and weak. On account of the loss of these weak lambs, and the lambs crushed by the ewe, or by death through lack of milk, a larger death rate often results; but even though this be true, the total number of lambs raised may still be increased. Every mature ewe, properly fed, should be capable of nursing two lambs. With the production of a large number of lambs, there will always be a supply of lambs to give to those ewes which have, for various reasons, lost their lambs, and thus most of the ewes in the flock will be doing their share in raising the lamb crop.

Management

The aim of the sheep owner should be to have his ewes successfully bred within a three or four week period so that the lambing season will not be prolonged. During the breeding season it is advisable to check the performance of the ram in order to make certain that the ewes are actually being bred. It not infrequently happens that rams, due to various causes, may be non-breeders, or in the case of one or more ewes, certain abnormalities may result in their failing to get in lamb. A little attention at the time, and more especially during the first few days, may avoid considerable disappointment later.

At the beginning of the breeding season the ram should be in a thrifty condition, not carrying a surplus of flesh. Heavy service is a considerable strain on the ram and unless fed liberally during this season he may lose weight and vitality.

There are various methods of managing the ram during the breeding season. One of the most common practices, especially in grade flocks, is to allow the ram to run continuously with the ewes. This system works out satisfactorily in small flocks, as the limit for one mature ram would be between thirty-five and fifty ewes. Less time and attention is necessary when this method is followed.

In large flocks, or when it is desirable to conserve the energy of the ram, there is some advantage in a modification of the above system, when the ram is allowed to run with the ewes during only part of the day. This allows for special feeding, and makes it possible for him to handle a flock of from fifty to seventy-five ewes.

Under certain conditions it may be an advantage to practise what is known as "hand coupling." Under this system the ram is not allowed to run with the flock, but ewes in season are brought to him for service. Usually a "teaser" is used. A "teaser" is an active ram, usually not being used for service, upon which an apron is tied to prevent copulation. He is allowed to run with the ewes for a short time each day to detect those that are in season. By use of this system a ram is capable of serving from seventy-five to one hundred ewes.

Well developed ram lambs may be used. Obviously it is not to be expected that they will handle as large a flock as a mature ram. Given reasonably good care, however, they should be able to take care of from twenty-five to thirty ewes.

In order to keep a check on the ewes as they are bred and become pregnant, lampblack or ochre should be painted upon the breast of the ram before being placed with the ewes. In this way records can be kept of the individual ewes as they become marked. At the end of a 16 or 18 day period the breast of the ram should be painted a different color. By following this practice ewes that are served again in their second "heat" period can be noted and if necessary recorded. If the coloring is changed on the ram every sixteen or eighteen days, the dates on which the ewes are due to lamb can be calculated and proper care given them during that time.

The painting of the breast of the ram has an additional advantage in that it is possible to determine how successful a breeder he is. If a large number of the ewes continue to be bred at each successive period the owner knows that the ram is either infertile or for some other reason is not settling the ewes. If certain ewes continue to be bred at each successive period, then one may have reason to suspect that something is abnormally wrong with the ewes; they may be infertile, due to abnormal or inactive reproductive organs or to obstructions, such as too long a dock or tags that make mating impossible.

WINTER FEEDING AND MANAGEMENT

Feeding

Numerous experiments conducted at the University of Alberta have shown, beyond a doubt, that the fleece weight and the strength and size of lambs are greatly influenced by the rations fed during pregnancy. Since practically all the income from sheep is derived from these two sources, the importance of winter feeding can be readily seen.

Certain feeds may be suitable from the standpoint of maintaining the flock in a satisfactory condition of flesh, or for fattening, but fail to provide a ration that will be sufficient for the development of strong, vigorous lambs. Soft, flabby, undersized, weak, goitred, and dead lambs take heavy toll each year in many flocks, a condition which can be traced, in many cases, to improper feeding of ewes during their pregnancy period. Unless the ewes receive the food constituents from which lambs and wool can be produced, fair sized, strong lambs, and normal wool growth cannot be secured.

Considerable experimental work has been conducted at the University of Alberta with a view to securing definite information with respect to the suitability of the common Alberta roughages, when fed both singly and in combination to pregnant ewes. The results of the earlier experiments were reported in an earlier published bulletin. The findings of these trials showed that certain feeds were unsuitable. Later work was outlined to find out what supplements could be fed in conjunction with the more unsuitable hays, when these form a portion of the ration, in order to secure stronger and better developed lambs.

The following discussion in connection with the various feeds is based on the results of these trials.

Alfalfa Hay.

Alfalfa hay is probably the only single roughage that contains a sufficient amount of all the required nutrients to carry the ewes successfully through the winter. During three winter trials the ewes were fed an average of 3.9 pounds of alfalfa daily. They were maintained in a better condition of flesh, gave birth to heavier lambs and produced heavier fleeces than was the case where they were fed any of the other single hay rations. Alfalfa hay is especially valuable as a roughage during the suckling period prior to the pasture season. When alfalfa has been added to a non-leguminous ration it has greatly

improved the performance of the ewes. Since it has been demonstrated that alfalfa can be successfully grown in most districts in Alberta, sheep owners should find it to their advantage to grow and feed this valuable crop.

Sweet Clover Hay.

Sweet clover ranks next to alfalfa as a roughage for wintering ewes. Although its protein content will compare favorably with alfalfa, sweet clover is not as palatable a roughage as alfalfa hay. On account of its coarser nature more difficulty is experienced in curing than in the case of alfalfa. For this reason, much of the sweet clover available for sheep feeding lacks the quality found in alfalfa.

Prairie Wool.

Prairie wool is usually composed of a mixture of grama, western wheat grass and dry land sedges. Spear grass may also be found, and if present in large amounts it is not safe to feed to sheep. Prairie Wool occasionally contains considerable dead grass from the previous year, its presence lowering its nutritive value. Prairie Wool of good quality is the most nutritious of the native grass hays, and will maintain the ewes in a fair condition of flesh throughout the winter when fed as the sole ration.

Upland Prairie Hay.

Upland Prairie Hay is composed of varying amounts of Blue, Western Rye, Brome, and June grasses. Prairie hay varies widely in composition. Sometimes small amounts of slough grasses, or other coarse and unpalatable plants, are found in Upland Prairie Hay. The greater proportion of Upland grasses the more palatable and nutritious will be the hay. During the three winter trials, when Upland Prairie Hay of medium quality was fed, ewes receiving an average of 3.3 pounds of hay, lost an average of 21 pounds in weight, but produced strong and fairly good sized lambs. Difficulties arose through weakness and lack of milk in the case of a few of the ewes that had lost considerable weight. In such cases lambs were not properly mothered and became unthrifty. The addition of whole oats, one-quarter to one-half pound daily, depending upon the quality of the hay, maintained the ewes in satisfactory condition, increased the size of the lambs, stimulated wool growth and avoided the difficulties of weakness and lack of milk on the part of the ewes. (See value of silage.)

Slough Hay.

As a general rule, slough hays are coarse, tough, unpalatable and have a low nutritive value. They cannot be satisfactorily fed to sheep, as they will not consume a sufficient quantity of it to supply even their own body requirements.

Oat Hay (Oat Greenfeed) (Oat Green Sheaves).

Oat hay, when fed alone, has proven to be a very poor roughage for pregnant ewes from the standpoint of lamb production. Soft, flabby, weak, goitred, partially hairless, and dead lambs were produced. Some years only a few lambs reached market age, while other years eighty per cent. of those produced were marketed. At the Wisconsin Experiment Station it was found in trials with dairy cows that the Oat plant, when used as the sole feed for pregnant cows, was deficient in minerals and produced small and weak calves, with a few cases of abortion. Reports received from certain districts in Alberta have shown that normal lamb crops are produced in some years at least, when oat hay alone is fed. Whether poor results from Oat hay feeding is limited to goitrous districts remains to be proven. Oat hay, however, has proven to be almost equal to Alfalfa hay for maintaining the ewes in a satisfactory condition of flesh.

In those districts where Oat hay is the principal roughage it can be satisfactorily used as the sole ration, providing it is supplemented with potassium iodide. Keeping in mind the fact that variety is an advantage in any ration, better results will be obtained when other hays or silages are fed along with Oat Hay. This does not, however, eliminate the necessity of feeding potassium iodide.

Brome, Red Top, and Western Rye Hays.

Due to their coarser nature these hays are usually found less palatable and nutritious. Where these hays are available they may be fed in conjunction with other more nutritious hays or, if fed alone, should be supplemented with grain in sufficient quantities to maintain the ewes in a thrifty condition.

Timothy Hay.

The use of Timothy hay should be avoided, on account of its relatively high price, low nutritive value, and injury to skin and value of fleece. The market price of Timothy hay is usually higher than any other roughage grown in the same district, and, for this reason, its use can not be recommended in preference to other more suitable roughages. It is unpalatable, and too often coarse and brittle, and the dry heads work into the fleece, irritating the skin, making shearing difficult, and lowering the selling price of the wool.

Oat Straw.

Oat straw lacks palatability and is low in nutritive value. At the University ewes fed on oat straw alone lost so much flesh, and became so weak, that it was necessary to supplement it with a liberal supply of other feeds in order to keep the ewes alive and put them into a reasonably thrifty condition for lambing.

When fed along with alfalfa, or some other nutritious roughage, or when grain mixtures are fed, oat straw may be fed in small amounts. With the feeding of oat straw, however, the same difficulty was experienced as when oat hay was fed—there was a tendency toward flabby, weak, goitrous and dead lambs. This points to the necessity of properly supplementing rations containing oat straw with potassium iodide.

Value of Silage.

Oat, Sunflower, or Corn silages, provided they are of good quality, may be fed as a part of the ration, provided the complete ration supplies the required nutrients.

Both oat silage and sunflower silage have been fed at the University of Alberta in combination with both oat hay and prairie hay. Silage was heavily fed, the ewes consuming all they would eat in one hour. The average amount of oat or sunflower silage fed daily was from 3 to 3.5 pounds per ewe. Hay was also full fed. When either of the two silages was fed, the ewes were maintained in a much better condition of flesh than when dry roughages alone were fed. The better maintenance of the ewes was also accompanied by heavier lambs and increased wool growth. Based upon dry matter, one pound of dry silage has a much greater nutritive content than one pound of dry hay.

When the ration consisted of any substantial portion of the oat plant, either in the form of oat hay or oat silage, or even the combination of the two, the result was the production of varying numbers of weak, goitrous, and dead lambs. This difficulty, however, was overcome by the feeding of potassium iodide.

Where available, silages made from alfalfa or sweet clover, provided they are of good quality, can also be fed. The fact that silages made from these two legumes are comparatively rich in protein suggests that they are better adapted for feeding with carbonaceous hays.

Silages made from Canadian or Russian thistles, or grasses other than have been mentioned, should not prove injurious to pregnant ewes, providing the normal chemical changes have

taken place in the silo and that the silages are free from mold or poisonous plants.

Roots.

Turnips and mangels are relished by the flock during the winter and where one takes the trouble to grow these it will be found that they add succulence and variety to the ration.

The Use of Grain Mixtures in Winter Rations.

Whether or not grain need be fed depends upon how well the roughage ration maintains the ewes in a thrifty condition. When roughages of poor quality are fed it may be necessary to supplement with grain in order that the lambs may be well developed and the ewes have sufficient milk at lambing time.

After lambing, grain feeding is advisable to meet the increased needs of the ewes for milk production. Oats is possibly the best single grain that can be fed during this period. The addition of a small amount of bran and linseed oil meal or both would be an advantage under certain conditions. It is well to feed from ¾ to 1 pound of grain per head daily until the ewes go to grass.

Management

During the winter the flock should be provided with a suitable shelter. An expensive building is not necessary to properly house the flock. Single ply board or straw sheds will provide the essential requirements. The main features to keep in mind are that the building should be located on high dry ground, should be kept clean, well bedded and properly ventilated, and of sufficient size to avoid crowding. It should also be well lighted, as sheep do not thrive as well when kept in dark quarters. From 10 to 15 square feet of ground space should be provided for each ewe.

Exercise during the winter months is very important, as it promotes thriftiness in ewes and results in stronger lambs. Sufficient exercise may be secured by the providing of yards of sufficient size. Except when storms prevent, feeding can be done out of doors, and if feeding racks are placed some distance away from their shelter this will induce the ewes to take a greater amount of exercise.

There is danger of abortions during the winter through injuries caused in various ways. Principal among these is the jamming of ewes in their effort to get through a narrow door or between obstacles that are close together. This may be overcome by providing doors of good width and by careful handling of the flock.

Before the flock is turned out on grass it is advisable to give some attention to the feet. Foot rot, deformed feet,

Fig. 20.—Showing one trimmed and one untrimmed hoof.

crooked legs, and broken down pasterns are often due to lack of attention in this connection. The hoof should be cut down level and the toes trimmed. This may be done with the use of an ordinary knife, pruning knife or toe clippers.

Attention should also be given to prevent fleeces from becoming filled with chaff and thereby decreasing their value.

Fig. 21.—Properly constructed feed racks means a saving in feed as well as maintaining a clean fleece.

For this reason the flock should not be allowed access to straw stacks or be fed from improperly constructed feed racks. Combination racks, which provide for both grain and roughage feeding, when closely boarded to within 5 or 6 inches of the bottom, prevent chaff from falling into the fleeces. The accompanying picture shows one type of such feed rack. From 18 to 20 inches of rack space should be provided for each ewe and a 10 foot rack from which both sides are used would therefore accommodate from 12 to 14 ewes. Feeding on the ground may also be done, but under this system considerably more feed is wasted.

Water should be provided daily even when snow is available, to insure that their needs for water is supplied. Salt is also necessary, and in districts where goitre has occurred the Potassium Iodide salt mixture is recommended. For information concerning the use of this mixture the reader is referred to the section of the bulletin dealing with sheep diseases.

CARE OF EWES AND LAMBS DURING THE LAMBING SEASON

If best results are to be obtained it is essential that considerable attention and care be given to the flock during the lambing period. It is at this time that more losses, ailments and difficulties occur than during any other season. Since the majority of lambs in Alberta are born in April and May, the lambing season takes place while the ewes are still under winter feeding conditions, although the temperature is usually high enough during most of the time to make close confinement in the barn unnecessary. Some farmers with small flocks have been successful in allowing the ewes to lamb around straw stacks or in the barnyard. There is danger, however, especially with larger flocks, of many avoidable losses occurring by such practice, since close observation and individual attention cannot be given the flock.

When the lambing season approaches and particularly when no record has been kept of the date each ewe was bred, the flock should be watched carefully each day and those ewes that show signs of lambing may be separated from the main flock where they can be given special attention and feed, in order to reduce losses to a minimum.

The enlarging of the udder and vulva can usually be noted a few days before the ewe is to lamb. As the time for lambing approaches the ewe becomes restless, may refuse to eat, and usually separates herself from the flock. The observation of these symptoms enables special attention to be given to the ewes and lambs during the time when losses are most likely to occur.

It will facilitate the handling of the flock if provision can be made for small pens in which the ewes can be placed a few days before and after lambing. Hinged, or movable partitions can be so arranged to provide the pens necessary within the larger winter shelter. Lambing pens should never be crowded because lambs may be trampled, crushed, or become separated from their mothers. Crowded lambing pens may result in some lambs sucking other ewes, and also produce ewes, which through continual separation from their lambs, disowning one or both of them. It may be necessary to clip off loose wool tags and dung locks around the hind quarters and udder of the ewes. This will not only make it easier for the young lambs to nurse, but will at the same time prevent avoidable loss caused by wool balls in the stomach of the

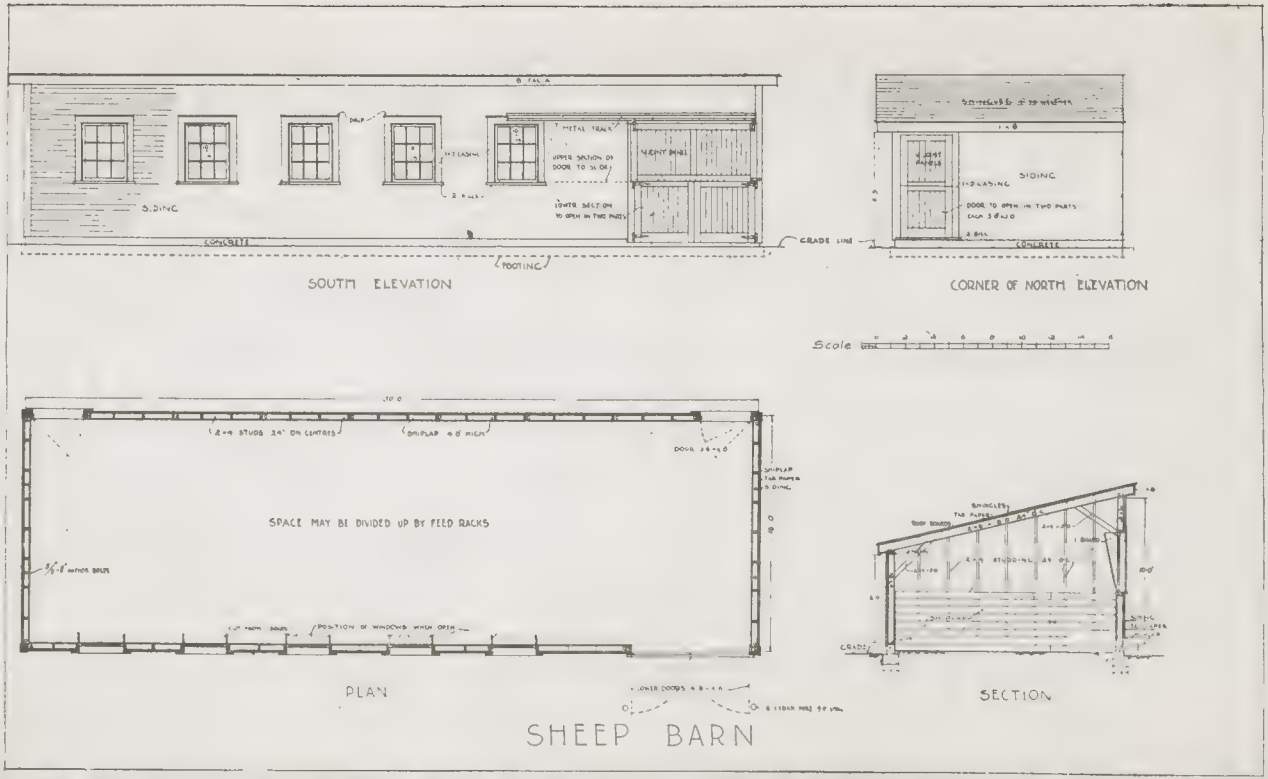


Fig. 22.—A cheap, shed-roof frame building, 16 x 50 feet, without any interior fittings, but suitable in every way for keeping sheep. A flock of about eighty sheep can be wintered comfortably in it. Published by permission of Professors Grieg and Shaw, University of Saskatchewan.

young lamb. The pregnant ewes, after being placed in the lambing pen, should be watched closely until the lambs have arrived, in order that proper care and attention may be given at this particular time.

There are various difficulties which may arise during the lambing season, for which assistance or attention on the part of the attendant is needed to prevent serious losses.

Ewes when laboring sometimes lie in a position so near the wall that it is impossible to expel the lamb. Careful observation is necessary to prevent this occurrence, as too long a delay will cause the death of the lamb in the uterus.

Lambs are born enclosed in a covering which if not ruptured during birth must be removed from the nostrils immediately after birth. In most cases either the struggling of the lamb or action on the part of the ewe performs this duty, but in a few cases she fails to do so, due to the fact that she is either too weak, is busy expelling the second lamb, or only gives attention to one of her lambs. Breathing must be established within a few minutes, and this can only be done when the covering has been removed.

Lambs born during cold weather often become chilled to such an extent that death may result unless proper treatment is given. Such lambs are often immersed in warm water and rubbed dry with a woolen cloth to stimulate the circulation of blood. A chilled lamb can be warmed by placing it in a box near the stove, or providing the box with a hot water jug enclosed in a blanket. Milk taken from its mother should be fed until it is strong enough to suckle. In severe cases the administration of a few drop of whiskey in a little water, or a diluted solution of spirits of ammonia, will prove beneficial.

Occasionally apparently lifeless lambs are dropped. Immediate attention must be given these lambs to revive them. The mucus in the nostrils and mouth should be first removed. Vigorously massaging the body, especially just back of the forelegs, as well as the movement of the forelegs, similar to resuscitating a person from drowning, will usually stimulate life processes.

Not infrequently the ewe has difficulty during parturition, due to one or more of many causes, in which cases mechanical assistance is required. Excessive size of lamb, or large headed lamb, or abnormal presentation of lamb are among the most common causes of difficult lambings.

Other abnormalities are the expulsion of the lamb bed (inversion of the uterus), retention of afterbirth and inflammation of the udder. The prevention and treatment for the above ailments are fully discussed in the section on diseases.

The problem of transferring a lamb to a foster mother arises in every fair sized flock. When lambs are born dead, or die soon after birth, the mother can often be given a lamb to raise. An orphaned lamb, or a twin or triplet, can be given to such ewes. Such practices make the bottle feeding of orphaned lambs unnecessary, and increases the rate of gains in the case of twins or triplets.

Many methods have been tried to induce ewes to adopt lambs. One of the earliest methods was to skin the ewe's dead lamb and tie the pelt upon the one to be adopted. This method is still practised. If a ewe loses her lamb at birth she may be encouraged to adopt another lamb by smearing it with some of her "cleanings." Isolation of ewe and lamb into a small pen should follow such practice. It may be necessary to hold the ewe to allow the lamb to suckle for the first few days. Many believe that the ewe will "mother" the lamb as soon as the lamb passes feces formed from the foster mother's milk.

Bottle feeding of lambs is sometimes necessary when milking ewes are not available to adopt them. For this purpose a wide-necked bottle with a nursing nipple is used. In bottle feeding there are a few things to be kept in mind, especially in the early stages—small amounts at frequent intervals, milk of blood temperature and cleanliness of nursing bottle and nipple.

METHODS OF IDENTIFICATION

It is essential in purebred flocks, and is desirable in grade flocks, that some method of identification be used. It facilitates the keeping of records as a basis for registration in purebred flocks and in the case of grade flocks assists materially when it comes to selection and culling.

There are several methods of marking. The placing of metal tags in the ears is the most common and possibly the most satisfactory method. Usually, the initials of the owner are placed upon one side of the tags and consecutive numbers placed upon the other face of the tag.

Ear notching is another method, and one that may lend itself to use in grade flocks or where it is desirable to identify lambs from different sires and for identification of ownership in the case of mixed flocks.

All purebred breeders must either tattoo or use ear tags. The breeder must "apply to the Canadian National Live Stock Records for and be allotted letters for his exclusive use with which to identify sheep lambed his property. If identifying by tatoo marking, the letters allotted the breeder shall be placed in the ear, left or right, designated by the Canadian

National Live Stock Records. In addition to the identification letters, there must also be tatooed in the other ear, the flock number of the animal followed by a designating year letter to signify the year of birth." The letter "T" will signify that the animal was born in 1939, the letter "U" that the year of birth was 1940, the letter "V", 1941, and so on.

If this system of tagging is used the purebred breeder must order the ear tags "from the Canadian National Live Stock Records. The tags will show the breeders letters allotted him by the Canadian National Live Stock Records and a flock number followed by a designating year letter. This identification tag must be placed in the right ear." Ear tags can be placed in the ear at any time after birth without causing the ear to droop, providing the tag is placed fairly close to the head.

DOCKING

The value of docking needs very little discussion. Practically every sheep owner realizes the importance of it and performs the operation without questioning its necessity. The operation is simple, requires little time, and there is practically no danger of loss if properly done.

When the tail is not removed manure adheres to the wool on the tail and around the anus, making a good place for invasion of maggots. Undocked lambs do not present as trim and attractive appearance as compared with docked lambs, and for this reason the former are discriminated against when offered for sale. The effect of leaving ewe lambs undocked may be even more serious than in the case of market lambs, as the presence of the tail with its accumulated filth may interfere during the breeding season in preventing normal service.

Docking should be done when the lambs are between five and fourteen days old. Lambs should not be castrated the same day, as the shock suffered by both operations may be too severe. The younger the lambs are docked the less severe is the effect, although it is not advisable to dock lambs before strength and thriftiness have been established.

The tail should be removed at the second joint from the body. There are two general ways of docking, one by searing and the other by cutting, the only difference being that in the first case the end of the dock is seared over, preventing the loss of blood, and when the dock is cut off with a sharp knife the dock is not seared and allows a greater loss of blood.

There are two principal kinds of searing irons, one shaped like a chisel, the other a hinged instrument, that sears through

Fig. 23.—Docking by knife or searing iron is easily done.

from both sides. The irons are heated to a cherry red. The operation should be quickly done to prevent the heat from burning the anus or vulva. When a docking chisel iron is used the lamb can be held as shown in picture (Fig. 23 lower). When the hinged searing iron is used the tail is usually pulled through a hole in a board one inch in thickness, removing tail flush with board.

When searing irons are not hot enough or if the operation is not quickly done the tissues become more or less inflamed, and usually a thick scab is formed under which infection may develop. The thickness of the scab prevents the skin around the sore from closing up. This condition and the presence of pus delays healing, so that the wound of lambs docked with the searing iron heals less quickly in most cases than when the knife is used.

Docking with a sharp knife is more quickly accomplished and less equipment is required. The sharper the knife the more easily the operation is accomplished. The lamb can be held as shown in Fig. 23 (top), and the tail removed by cutting through from the top or from underneath. One man can perform the operation, while when using searing irons two men are required. Blood flows freely from the freshly cut dock. Usually the flow of blood is rapid for about ten seconds. Within one minute the flow generally ceases. However, in a few cases the rapid flow of blood may continue, and in such cases it is necessary to tie a string around the dock to save the life of the lamb. When this is done the string should not be allowed to remain on longer than necessary. To prevent infection it is desirable to apply a disinfectant to the dock after the operation and thus insure rapid healing.

CASTRATION

All male lambs, not intended for breeding purposes, should be castrated. Uncastrated lambs, after reaching fifty or sixty pounds, are continually worrying the ewe flock. This results in slower gains being made by not only the lambs, but the ewe flock as well. If ram lambs are allowed to remain with the ewes during the latter part of August and September, there is danger of "catch" breeding, which makes the handling of the flock in early spring more difficult.

Ram lambs produce a carcass of undesirable conformation with a more or less pronounced strong taste thereby reducing their market value. Livestock buyers discriminate against uncastrated lambs, and the cut in price is sufficient to make castration a profitable practice to follow.

Castration is not a difficult operation to perform. It should be done on a warm, clear day. If the day be cool and damp, the lambs become chilled and death may follow. Even if death does not take place, there may be a lowering of the vitality and thrift of the lambs for a shorter or longer time. Dry, clean quarters should be provided to prevent infection from manure and filth.

Lambs are usually castrated at between seven and fourteen days of age. When this operation is performed at a younger age, a large percentage of the lambs may lack sufficient strength to withstand the shock. When older than fourteen days, severity of the shock is increased and the recuperation extended over a longer period.

There are two ways in which castration can be done. Most authorities claim that after the lower third of the scrotum is removed the testicles can be squeezed out sufficiently to be grasped with fingers or teeth and pulled out.

The second method of castration after one-third of the scrotum is removed is similar to that of castrating pigs or calves, where the testicular, or outer covering, is cut, exposing the testicle. In the case of lambs, however, it is necessary to exercise considerable care not to cut too deeply into the testicle, in which case its removal is difficult. Difficulty may be experienced when the first few lambs are castrated, but as soon as the positions and manipulations are learned this method of castration becomes simple.

Before castrating, the hands of the operator, the knife, and the scrotum should be washed with a good disinfectant. Immediately after castrating, the empty scrotum should be rinsed out by lifting up the scrotum and pouring disinfectant into both cavities from a bottle.

Even though plenty of disinfectant is used, infection may enter. This is indicated by a swollen scrotum that may be easily detected a few days to two weeks after castrating. The enlarged scrotum is due to closing up the wound before all infection has drained out. It should be opened up to allow the necessary drainage, and again disinfected.

SHEARING AND HANDLING OF FLEECES

In ordinary practice sheep are shorn only once each year, usually in the spring or early summer, after the cold weather has passed. Earlier shearing will often necessitate some extra provision for shelter or protection to avoid losses, while, on the other hand, more or less loss of fleece and discomfort to the sheep results if the wool is left on for any considerable length of time after the warm weather arrives.

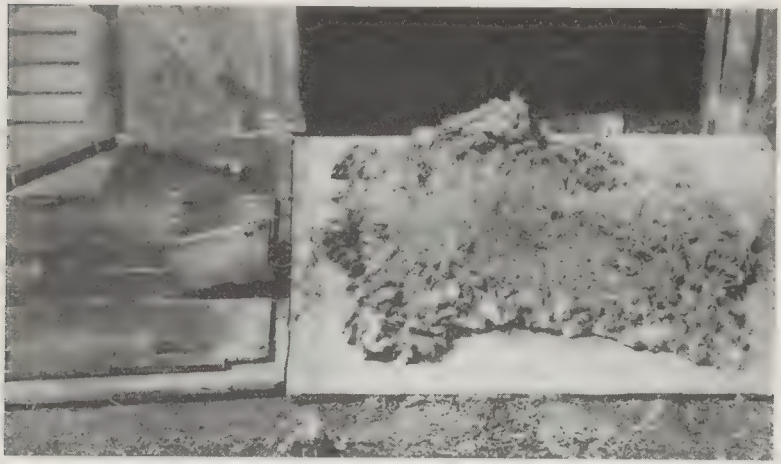


Fig. 24.—Fleeces should be removed intact, rolled from rump to shoulder with skin side out to give each fleece a good appearance and to enable proper grading.

Shearing is best done on a bright warm day and when the wool is dry. In order to prevent the fleece from becoming dirty, the work should be done on a clean floor or sod. In the event these are not available, a canvas will be found very useful.

Two methods of shearing are common. One is by use of hand shears and the other with the machine clipper. The machine method of shearing has proven most rapid, and when the flock is fairly large it will justify the purchase of a hand or power machine. With the use of the machine the fibres are cut closer to the body and a smoother appearance given to the shorn animal than by hand clipping. There is also less danger of cutting the animal and making second cuts of the fibre.

There is no single method of shearing which is recognized as the best. Practically all experienced shearers work with the animal held upon its rump, leaning slightly toward the operator, in which position most parts of the animal's body are readily reached with the shears and less struggling on the part of the animal is experienced. As a rule, the practice is to start by opening up the fleece with a cut extending from the under side of the neck to the belly and from this opening shearing head, neck and usually the belly. The wool on the sides and the back can then be removed by long sweeping strokes of the shears. The aim of the shearer should be to shear reasonably close to the skin, avoiding cutting the animal,

Fig. 25.—The use of the wool box adds to the appearance and ease of packing.

or making second cuts on the fleece and secure a fleece with the neck, back and sides intact to enable proper tying and grading.

The intact fleece should be then placed shorn side down, all dung locks and tags removed and the edges folded in to form a strip not over two feet in width, then rolled from rump to shoulder so that the best grade of wool is on the outside. It should be tied only with paper twine, as other kinds of twine, such as binder twine, tangle up with the fibres of the wool and lower the selling price of the fleece.

The use of a wool box for tying gives to the fleece an attractive appearance. Fleeces that have been boxed are more compact and can be readily packed into the large shipping sacks. Satisfactory tying of the fleece can be done, however, without the use of a box, providing the fleece is carefully removed and rolled.

The Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers, Limited, maintains assembling and shipping stations in all provinces in the Dominion and has proven a satisfactory medium through which a large volume of the Canadian clip is now marketed.

DIPPING

In most flocks it is usually found necessary to dip at least once each year to insure freedom from ticks and lice. Dipping also has an additional advantage in the improvement of the

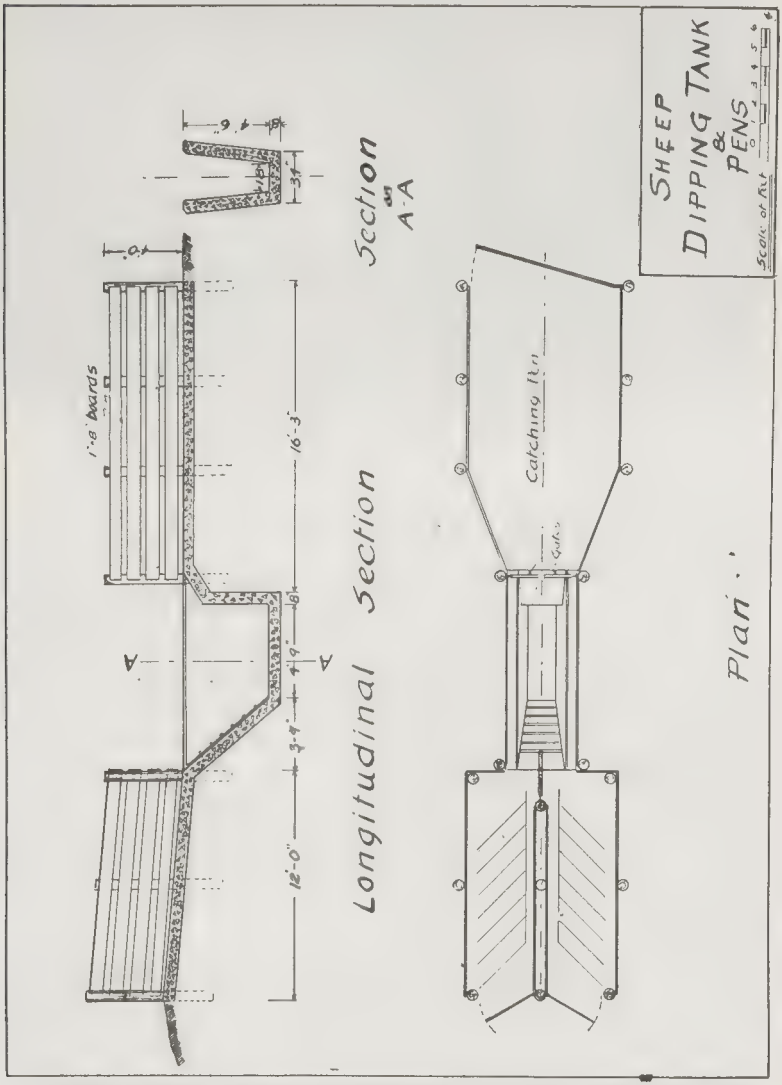


Fig. 26.—Drawing showing arrangement of dipping tank and pens suitable for medium-sized flocks.

skin and wool. The most favorable time is in the spring, shortly after the sheep have been shorn. At this time the entire flocks, both ewes and lambs, should be dipped. In badly infested flocks, it is sometimes necessary to dip twice yearly, the second dipping usually being done in the fall before cold weather has arrived.

A warm bright day should be selected when the fleeces are dry, and dipping is preferably done in the morning so as to give the sheep a chance to dry out again before night. Many kinds of sheep dips, both in liquid and powder form are procurable and, provided they are properly used, they should give satisfactory results.

A galvanized zinc, cement, or wooden tank set in the ground with the top level with the surface should be provided. In addition, suitable pens and runways facilitate the handling of the flock and prevents wastage of the dip. In the dipping of sheep it is necessary to see that each animal remains in the tank until the fleece is well soaked. The draining pen is so arranged that all the dip which runs off the sheep flows back into the vat.

SUMMER FEEDING AND MANAGEMENT

Provided suitable pastures are available the flock may be carried through the season with very little if any supplementary feeding. On some farms there is a certain amount of native pasture available which will provide plenty of grass for the flock throughout the season. Summerfallow and stubble fields may in certain seasons be utilized to help out as a sheep pasture. There are many districts in the Province where most of the land is under cultivation, and under such conditions it may be necessary to plan for pasture crops to meet the needs of the flock.

Fall Rye.

This pasture provides the earliest of all cultivated pastures. It is also the earliest pasture to be finished, for as soon as heading takes place it is coarse, unpalatable, and provides little vegetation. After the rye has been pastured the field may be reseeded to rape or some other suitable pasture which makes possible the utilization of such fields for a succession of crops during one pasture season. For best results fall rye should be seeded in the middle of summer the year previous, at the rate of about three bushels per acre.

Oats.

Oats can be seeded in the spring at the rate of three bushels per acre as soon as the land is tillable. It reaches a growth of about eight inches in five to six weeks, at which time the flock is turned on. This pasture induces fair gains for both ewes and lambs. Unless kept well and evenly pastured the oats will become mature, coarse and unpalatable. During the latter part of the summer, this pasture shows little growth and does not provide as much fodder as it does during the early summer months. In some cases it is possible to plow and reseed these fields to rye in August which will provide late fall and spring pasture.

During periods of wet weather there is usually more or less waste in the case of oat pasture due to the fact that the ground is soft, the growth rank, and a considerable portion of the crop will be lost by tramping.

There is an advantage in seeding two or more fields to oats at intervals of three or four weeks to provide a succession of pastures. After the flock has eaten down the first seeded pasture and removed to the second, it will be found that in a

few weeks, provided there is reasonable moisture, the earlier seeded field will have sufficient second growth for repasturing.

Oats and Rye Pasture.

This mixed pasture has been used for several years at the University. Although it does not result in the animals making better gains than on oat pasture alone, it provides feed for a longer period—the rye providing fodder after the oats have become mature or fail to provide sufficient growth. Another advantage of this mixed pasture is that it provides an early fall rye pasture the following spring. The seeding of one and one-half bushels of oats and one and one-half bushels of fall rye per acre has proven satisfactory.

Rape.

Rape pasture is one of the best pastures for sheep, both ewes and lambs make more rapid gains than on oat or oat and rye pastures. For fattening lambs after weaning, or ewes for market, or for flushing ewes prior to and during the breeding season, rape pasture can be recommended. It is a middle summer to late fall pasture since the early seeded rape makes slow growth during the cooler spring months. During the warmer months of summer and late fall the growth is rapid so that rape pasture allows heavier pasturing than on cereal grain pastures. Seeding broadcast at the rate of from five to six pounds per acre is the general practice.

Rape may cause bloat when the animals are first placed on the pasture. This is especially true if sheep are turned on while the rape is wet with rain or dew. Placing them on rape when the field is dry and the animals have been liberally fed other feeds will largely eliminate this danger. The animals should soon become adjusted to the rape pasture and can be kept on it through rains and heavy dew without danger of bloat. When sheep or lambs are confined to rape alone there may be more or less scouring. Better results may be obtained from pasturing rape if the flock have access to a grass field.

Alfalfa.

Although alfalfa has proven to be a nutritious pasture crop, it is very likely to cause bloat in sheep. When alfalfa is used as a pasture crop for sheep it is necessary to exercise care especially when first turned in. Extreme losses may be avoided by not turning the sheep in when hungry, or when the plants are wet with dew or rain. Dry, fairly well matured alfalfa is less liable to cause bloat than wet immature alfalfa pasture, and for this reason caution should be observed in placing sheep on alfalfa. A number of experienced sheep-

men in the irrigated districts of Southern Alberta usually avoid the use of alfalfa pasture as far as possible.

Sweet Clover.

It is adapted to practically all types of soil, and may be more widely grown in the Province than alfalfa. It supplies a large volume of pasture and is a crop that might very well receive more consideration by sheepmen in Alberta. There is also less danger from bloat than in the case of alfalfa, very little difficulty being experienced in this connection, providing reasonable precautions are taken.

Red Top, Brome, Western Rye.

These and other permanent grasses or mixtures of these make suitable sheep pastures throughout the season. They are most palatable and tender during the early months, but become tough and unpalatable unless pastured heavily enough to prevent the grass from becoming mature.

Some form of shelter should be provided while on pasture to protect the animals during severe storms and from the direct rays of the sun. Trees are possibly the best natural shelters, but if these are not available and winter shelters are long distances away from the sheep pastures, temporary shelters may be provided. When placed on well drained ground, straw or board roof shelters open on all sides are satisfactory.

During the summer, sheep should be watered at least once daily, or if possible water should be available at all times. Salt should be provided regularly or made available to the flock so they may take it when needed. Coarse stock salt is preferable, and may be set out in troughs or boxes, but when this is done it should be kept under cover to prevent leaching and loss by rains.

WEANING

Lambs are usually weaned when from 4 to 5 months old. At this age the lambs have reached the stage when they will receive no setback when suitable pastures are available. Weaning at this time allows some time for the ewes to regain flesh and condition before the breeding season arrives. It is also necessary in purebred flocks, when ram lambs are being retained, to wean before the rams have reached the age when there is danger of the ewes being bred.

Since it is desirable to dry up the ewes as quickly as possible, they should be placed on a scant pasture or dry feed. Every two or three days for the first week the condition of the udder should be noted and, if necessary, milked out in order

to prevent serious udder trouble. After all danger in this connection is over, the ewes should be placed on good pasture to fit them for the breeding season.

At weaning time the lambs should be provided with as good a pasture as possible. In case the pasture is not particularly good, grain feeding at this time may be advisable. In purebred flocks ram lambs should be separated from the ewe lambs.

Weaning time affords a good opportunity for the culling of the breeding flock, for the selection of ewe lambs to be retained, and at the same time to compare the relative merits of various rams that have been used as sires during the past season in the flock. Such work is best accomplished when breeding records have been kept and lambs have been marked. Errors may be avoided, such as culling ewes that, due to their being heavy milkers and good mothers, may be relatively thin and lack condition. Records of the breeding flock are also of material assistance as a basis for the selection of lambs to be kept for breeding. The progeny of the best breeding animals in the flock can in this way be maintained and greater uniformity in the flock be developed. Where more than one sire has been used in the flock the result of each mating can be observed and this offers a guide in determining the most satisfactory matings for the following year. Improvement in the type and quality of the ewe flock as well as the lambs is secured only when selection, culling and matings are intelligently made.

LAMB FEEDING

By R. D. SINCLAIR

In certain areas of Alberta the fattening of range bred lambs has developed into a livestock enterprise of considerable importance. Each year comparatively large numbers of range lambs reach the end of the pasture season light in weight and in an unfinished condition. These "feeder" lambs leave the ranches on which they are raised and are available to be finished on farms where a supply of suitable roughages and grain is available. Over a period of years the rise in price which takes place between September, October and November, the period when the bulk of the feeder lambs reach the market, and December, January and February, when such lambs are finished for market, makes it possible to carry on such an undertaking on a reasonably profitable basis.

Lamb fattening usually consists of dry lot feeding with dry roughage and grain, but in areas where rape does well, lambs will make good gains on this forage, and in the case of heavier lambs, in reasonably good condition when purchased, they may be finished for market without the use of grain. During the fall of 1937, at the University of Alberta, range bred lambs were carried on rape pasture from September 28th to November 2nd, and during that period made an average daily gain of .37 pounds. Lambs weighing from 70 to 75 pounds when placed on the pasture were finished for market at weights from 85 to 90 pounds at the end of the 35 day pasture period. This plan makes it possible to put weight on lambs cheaply and gives lighter lambs a good start for dry lot feeding.

In connection with the purchasing of feeder lambs, good thrifty lambs weighing from 60 to 65 pounds are usually the best material. Lambs of these weights can put on from 25 to 30 pounds during the finishing process and this will allow for the utilization of considerable feed as well as providing for the advantage which may result from a rise in the market price between purchasing and selling.

If feeder lambs have been shipped some distance, and especially if they have been running on scant pasture before purchasing, they should not be allowed access to lush pasture such as aftermath of hay fields or rape without being given at least a partial fill of dry roughage or turned into a pasture which has been eaten down. A sudden change to abundant forage may result in serious digestive troubles.

When lambs go into the feed lot proper they should be started on grain gradually, starting with about .1 pound or 1 pound to 10 lambs, increasing the amount by easy stages until they are getting from 1 pound to 1.25 pounds per head daily at the end of one month. If the object is to finish the lambs as quickly as possible, the daily feed of grain may be increased to 1.5 pounds per head. Toward the end of the feeding period lambs will eat very close to 2 pounds per head daily. This amount may be considered a maximum and would only be consumed by very strong lambs.

Fig. 27.—Market lambs of good type, bred and finished at the University of Alberta.

Oats, barley and wheat may be used in lamb fattening. Standard recleaned screenings can also be utilized. Lambs prefer these grains whole rather than ground. Oats may be used more heavily in the early part of the finishing period than during the latter stages, and barley and wheat may be used interchangeably depending upon their relative price per pound. In connection with a lamb feeding experiment conducted at the University of Alberta during the winter of 1933-34, barley and wheat gave practically the same results in terms of rate and economy of gains. A suitable method of mixing oats and the heavier grains as the feeding period advances, may be worked out along the following lines:

	Oats (parts by wt.)	Barley or Wheat (parts by wt.)
First two weeks	2	1
Second two weeks	1	1
Third two weeks	1	2
Balance	1	3

Roughages of good quality should be used in lamb finishing. Hays which are not in good condition or are not suitable for sheep feeding should not be fed. In certain districts where

lambs are fed oat greenfeed is a staple roughage and can be used with fair satisfaction, although best results are secured when it is fed along with some such hay as native upland hay or alfalfa. Alfalfa hay possesses certain qualities which make it very valuable for lamb feeding. To illustrate the beneficial effects of feeding alfalfa hay along with oat hay to fattening lambs, the following figures from an experiment carried out at the University during the winter of 1937-38 are shown:

	Lot I. Oat Hay alone	Lot II. Oat Hay and Alfalfa Hay
No. of Lambs	22	22
Av. Daily Gain	.22	.31
Av. Daily Feed:		
Oat Hay (lbs.)	1.37	.84
Alfalfa Hay (lbs.)	.....	.74
Grain (lbs.)	1.26	1.22
Feed for 100 lbs. Gain in Wt.:		
Hay	494.3	505.3
Grain	453.6	389.6

It is to be noted that the lambs which were fed alfalfa hay along with the oat hay made slightly more rapid gains than those fed the oat greenfeed alone, and while they required approximately the same amount of hay to make 100 lbs. of gain, they required considerably less grain. The oat hay was valued at $7.00 per ton, and on a comparative basis alfalfa hay was worth $13.00 per ton. In the light of this experiment and our general experience with alfalfa hay in sheep feeding, prospective lamb feeders should make every effort to grow a certain amount of alfalfa.

The figures in the above table will bear studying by the prospective lamb feeder apart from the alfalfa hay feature, because they set out quite typically the averages for daily gains, amount of feed eaten daily and the amount of hay and roughage required to put on 100 pounds of live weight.

When alfalfa or other legume hays are not available and particularly when oat hay is the only roughage fed, the feeding of a small amount of linseed oil meal is to be recommended. This supplement may be fed conveniently by mixing it with the grain at the rate of 10 pounds to 90 pounds of grain, or in other words, at the rate of 10 per cent. of the concentrate mixture. The price which one is justified in paying for linseed oil meal for lamb feeding is governed very largely by the price of grain. In general it may be stated that linseed oil meal is not worth more per pound than twice the value of grain on the farm.

When the roughage portion of the lamb ration consists of hays other than alfalfa, consideration should be given to the

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feeding of some form of mineral. Light lambs being heavily fed on grain may suffer from lime deficiency. In lamb feeding experiments finely ground limestone has been used, and when added to the grain ration at the rate of 1 per cent. has resulted in improvement in appetite and an increase in the rate of gain.

Lambs in the feed lot should have access to salt at all times. During a three month feeding period lambs will consume an average of 1 pound of salt.

For the benefit of those who may contemplate lamb feeding and who have not had previous experience with this type of livestock production, the following table shows the rate of gain which may be expected and the amount of feed required under good feeding conditions to carry an individual lamb through a feeding period of 100 days:

Average Daily Gain	.25 to .3 lbs.
Hay Required	150 lbs.
Grain Required	125 lbs.
Salt Required	1 lb.
Linseed Oil Meal (if fed)	12 lbs.

LAMB MARKETING

A study of market demands, receipts, price fluctuations and farm conditions, all have a direct bearing on the economics of marketing lambs.

In former years a well fleshed lamb weighing over 100 pounds was readily sold for the top price. There has been an increasing demand during recent years, however, for lambs of lighter weights, until at the present time lambs weighing from 85 to 90 pounds and carrying sufficient flesh are the most desirable. Lambs considerably lighter, provided they carry the required finish, are acceptable. Buyers of lambs discriminate against those that are overweight, undocked or not castrated.

The most ideal market condition would be to have lambs supplied at a steady rate throughout the year. Under present conditions in Alberta, however, this is not an easy matter. The bulk of the lambs usually reach market during the latter part of September, October and November, at which time the price has a tendency to drop. The supply during the winter and early spring months comes from lambs, the majority of which have spent some time in the feed lot. There is a reasonably steady supply of lambs during this time, with the result that prices are usually maintained at a fairly high level. The fact that during the late spring and early summer months comparatively few lambs are available, means that prices usually reach the peak at this time.

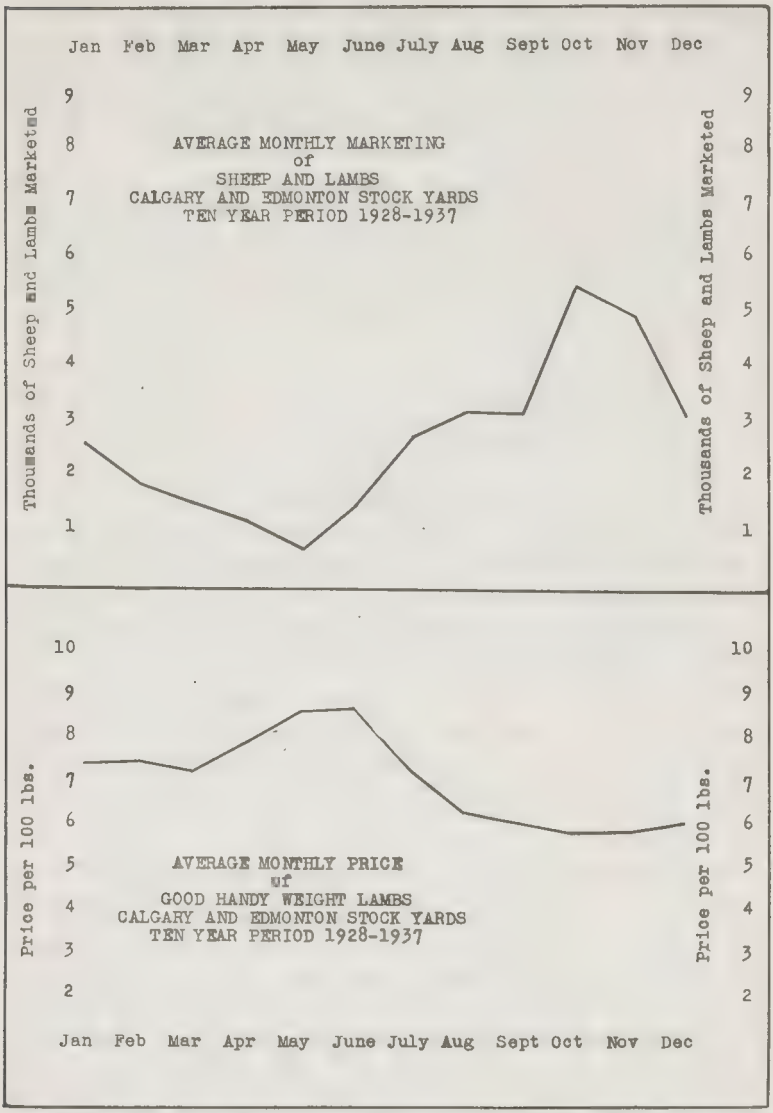
Jan Feb Mar Apr May June July Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec
Thousands of Sheep and Lambs Marketed
AVERAGE MONTHLY MARKETING
of
SHEEP AND LAMBS
CALGARY AND EDMONTON STOCK YARDS
TEN YEAR PERIOD 1928-1937
Price per 100 lbs.
AVERAGE MONTHLY PRICE
of
GOOD HANDY WEIGHT LAMBS
CALGARY AND EDMONTON STOCK YARDS
TEN YEAR PERIOD 1928-1937

Fig. 28.—Chart showing the average monthly marketings and average monthly price of sheep and lambs, Calgary and Edmonton Stockyards, 1928-1937.

The seasonal price fluctuations are dependent on how regularly the market is supplied with lambs. In the fall when the bulk of the lambs are marketed there is usually a drop in price and as the supply of feeder lambs becomes less the price paid for lambs is increased. The highest price paid for lambs usually occurs about May and continues fairly steady until late in the summer when the number of current year lambs that reach the market increases. (See Chart, page 62.)

Since most lambs from domestic flocks are born between February and June, the housing, climatic and feeding conditions under which they are reared vary according to the time of birth. The earliest born lambs require better shelters, and must be liberally fed in order for them to reach an earlier and higher priced market than the later born lambs. In addition little or no use can be made of pasture. March and April lambs are born at a time when less elaborate shelters are required. Good use is made of pastures, less grain is fed and the lambs usually reach market in August, September and October. Lambs born in May and June, although requiring little or no shelter when young, usually require an additional feeding period after pasture season closes.

These differences in conditions under which lambs are reared means that there is considerable variation in the cost of producing lambs for early and late markets. Since the shelters, pasture and feed conditions naturally vary on the different farms in Alberta, the question of the market which will prove the most profitable is one that will necessarily have to be worked out by each sheep owner.

SHEEP DISEASES

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The brief synopsis of some of the diseases of sheep contained in this bulletin is an endeavor to furnish the small sheep owner particularly, who has just started in the sheep business, with the more important and characteristic symptoms of some of the common diseases that might be met with in small flocks. We have endeavored to avoid long treatises when possible and only those remedies have been considered that are easily obtainable, and regarded from the standpoint of ease of application.

Owing to the frequent confusion in diagnosing sheep diseases, it is important to call in a Veterinary Surgeon if one is available, rather than trust too much to one's own ability in distinguishing a disease and prescribing medicines for it. The fact should be emphasized that a disease does not always display identical symptoms in each animal, and only when several are affected may certain general symptoms be present. As a rule, sheep are not as susceptible to disease as other classes of farm animals. But it is common knowledge among sheep men that when a sheep becomes ill, it will quickly succumb, unless a correct diagnosis is made, and the proper treatment promptly and intelligently applied. It is also known by authorities on sheep diseases that medicinal remedies frequently do not have the same effect upon the system as they would with other classes of live stock. This may be due to the intricate and tortuous digestive system, resulting in the slow absorption of any drugs given. One interesting fact should also be kept in mind, and that is, that sheep frequently consume, with apparent relish, forage that other animals will not touch at all. This peculiar feature, as regards diet, may be the cause of sheep being rather prone to digestive disorders. Reports of losses brought to our attention would indicate that a very large percentage of sheep troubles can be traced directly to disarrangement of the digestive tract.

Administering Medicines

It has been the common practice with many men unfamiliar with the handling of sheep, when it is advisable to administer medicines, to set the animal on its rump to drench it. This is unadvisable, and better results will be obtained by standing the animal in a corner and elevating its mouth slightly. In handling the animal in this way, the danger of pouring a por-

tion of the medicine into the lungs, and causing pneumonia, is lessened. The use of a two-ounce syringe is the most convenient way of administering medicine. Under no circumstances should the tongue be held. The mouth should be kept closed and the animal allowed to swallow the medicine slowly. The administration of fluids from a bottle is practised by many, but numerous cases of mechanical pneumonia have resulted from this method. In small lambs a spoon may be used, and by pouching out the lower lip, the medicine may be poured into the cavity so formed.

Dosage

There seems to be much confusion and misunderstanding as to the amount of medicine given to a sheep. In all diseases, the cases vary greatly with the circumstances. Antidotes for poisoning in sheep are given in enormous quantities, as compared to quantities given to other classes of live stock. The following is a convenient drug table that is well worth remembering:

1 teaspoonful equals 1 dram.
1 tablespoonful equals ½ an ounce.
1 common tumbler contains about 8 ounces, or ½ a pint.
1 common teacup will hold about 8 ounces.

A lamb should be given 1/3 to ½ the size of the dose given to an adult sheep.

DISEASES OF THE RESPIRATORY ORGANS

Nasal Catarrh (Snuffles)

This ailment is usually the result of exposure to cold or rain, and dipping or shearing too early will often cause it. Sheep and lambs with thin coverings of wool are susceptible. It may also be the result of the invasion of parasites, but in our province this is rare.

Symptoms:

In the acute form there is a clear, watery discharge from the nostrils. Later this becomes thick, stringy and yellowish. The eyes are usually congested and show a discharge. If the animals have been affected for some time, or in other words, if the case becomes chronic, the discharge from the nostrils may become fetid and more yellowish in color.

Treatment:

This trouble may be largely prevented by giving sheep proper shelter in bad weather. It is usually recommended to wash the nostrils out with a 2% solution of Creolin, Cresol or any good coal-tar disinfectant. If the animals are weak

or exhausted, they may be given a stimulant, such as Sweet Spirits of Nitre, ½ a teaspoonful in 4 ounces of water, 3 or 4 times a day. Pine-tar may be smeared over the nostrils and the animals should be placed in clean, dry quarters for a few days.

Pneumonia

Pneumonia in sheep may be brought on by a variety of causes, such as improper drenching, exposure, chills, wet weather and the sequel to Nasal Catarrh or Bronchitis. It is most prevalent during the winter months, and invariably occurs when the weather suddenly turns cold after the sheep have been dipped. Cold, wet, foggy seasons predispose the animals to pneumonia.

Symptoms:

There is an increase in temperature, a cough, labored respiration and loss of appetite. The animal usually stands, but when it does lie, rests directly on the breast bone. The mucous membranes are congested, and there is frequently a nasal discharge. In lambs, the course of the disease is usually rapid, death taking place in from 2 to 6 days. Older sheep may have a chronic form which lasts from 3 to 6 weeks.

Treatment:

Animals should be isolated and placed in dry, comfortable quarters. Common drenches consisting of flour or bran gruels may be given. Many recommend stimulants, such as Sweet Spirits of Nitre, ½ a teaspoonful in 4 ounces of water, 3 or 4 times a day. When a large number of sheep are affected, the administration of Salicylate of Soda may be given in the drenching solution in the proportion of 2 teaspoonfuls to a gallon.

DISEASES OF THE DIGESTIVE ORGANS

Bloat

This condition is a common one in Alberta, and frequently large numbers of sheep are lost from this cause. It may occur from feeding upon wet rape or any wet or frosted grain forage, but probably the most dangerous is wet alfalfa. It may occur also when sheep have been confined to grass pasturage and suddenly turned upon grain fields in the fall of the year. Occasionally during the past few seasons cases have been reported that were no doubt caused by feeding frozen or mouldy ensilage.

Symptoms:

Evidences of this trouble are readily apparent. It appears first in the distention of the abdomen, particularly noticeable

in the left flank. Respirations are labored and the staggering gait is well marked. Death from suffocation usually results.

Treatment:

At the commencement of acute indigestion, the proper treatment would be the administering of anti-ferments and stimulants. The best drug to stop the formation of gases is Aromatic Spirits of Ammonia, the dose being ½ an ounce in 5 ounces of water. Turpentine is also strongly recommended, ½ an ounce in 6 ounces of raw linseed oil would be the proper mixture. A treatment highly recommended by sheep men, where a large number of animals is affected at one time, consists of the following: equal parts of Turpentine, Aromatic Spirits of Ammonia, Formalin, Kerosene and cow's milk are carefully mixed together. The proper dose would be about 2 ounces for an adult sheep. In acute cases, where the administration of medicines has failed, the left flank should be punctured with a clean trocar and cannula.

Impaction of the Rumen

This condition may be caused by fermenting foodstuffs, or may occur at certain stages of some disease. It is usually, however, due to indigestible foods with insufficient water. In our province, it is often found where the animals have been fed a large quantity of wheat straw and where the water supply is inadequate. It may also occur as the result of insufficient exercise.

Symptoms:

The animal is dull; the mouth is usually dry; there is a loss of appetite and a suspension of rumination; colicky pains are sometimes in evidence; a doughy feeling may be noted in the left flank.

Treatment:

The administration of 4 ounces of Epsom Salts in a quart of lukewarm water should be given at once. To this may be added 2 drams of Aromatic Spirits of Ammonia. In the case of young lambs, 2 ounces of linseed oil may be given in preference to the above. Succulent green feed should be given for several days.

Diarrhea

The most common form of diarrhea in sheep is sometimes due to disturbances of the digestive tract, the result of spoiled feed or exposure to cold and wet, following shearing. We frequently see it as the result of sudden changes from dry to succulent pastures. In some instances it may also be due to parasites in the intestinal tract.

Treatment:

The cause must be removed before recovery can take place. The feed should be carefully examined and changed if necessary. It is best first to give a purgative such as 4 ounces of castor or raw linseed oil, or the same amount of Epsom Salts, to remove all irritating matter from the digestive organs. If the diarrhea persists, 20 grains of Nitrate of Bismuth in a little milk may be given. Proper care in the way of preventing chills and the placing of affected animals in comfortable surroundings will do much to alleviate the trouble.

Infectious Dysentery

This disease is caused by the Bacillus Coli Communis. When these bacteria gain entrance into a flock of young lambs, the losses are quite often considerable. Very few outbreaks have occurred in Alberta, and losses attributed to this source may be due to digestive disturbances of ewes, brought about by the feeding of spoiled feed or irritants in the forage.

Symptoms:

When the trouble is due to bacteria, it usually affects new-born lambs, a day or so old. The lambs become dull, there is loss of appetite, weakness, and the eyes grow glassy. The victim soon passes into a stupor, from which there is no recovery.

Treatment:

The first thing to be done is to isolate all apparently sick lambs from the healthy ones. Those affected are best treated by the administration of 1 or 2 drops of Formalin in a little milk. Some advise the giving of 2 ounces of castor or linseed oil. Lambs affected with the infectious type of the disease usually succumb, and it is an apparently hopeless task to successfully treat them. Prevention is by far the best method of controlling the trouble, cleanliness and sanitation being the weapons used.

Constipation

In lambs this condition is frequently brought about by wool balls. In animals a month or so old, it may be due to digestive disturbances, resulting from indigestible, dry feed and an insufficient amount of water.

Symptoms:

There will be loss of appetite, uneasiness, colicky pains, roaching of the back and straining.

Treatment:

Two ounces of castor oil should be administered. In addition to this, the ewe should be given a tablespoonful of Sodium

Hyposulphide once a day. Both the mother and lamb should be placed on laxative food, such as green oats, bran, or linseed oil meal, until the animals recover their appetite.

DISEASES OF THE EWE

Abortion

Abortion in ewes may be due to a variety of causes. It may be the result of the animal being affected with a febrile disease such as Blackleg, Scab or Pneumonia. Again, it may be due to the ingestion of mouldy food, or the result of giving large doses of intestinal antiseptics. It occurs occasionally in some flocks as a specific infection, although this is quite rare as a rule.

Treatment:

When several cases ccur at the same time, it is advisable to examine the feed carefully. Most of the cases result from feeding succulent food when the animals are not accustomed to it. If this should be the case, the forage should be changed immediately. The genital organs may be washed out with a 1% solution of Carbolic Acid or Cresol. If the losses should be of an infectious nature, the aborting animals should be isolated and the fetuses and soiled bedding should be burned. The barns which contained these animals should be carefully disinfected and the floors and passageways should be well limed to prevent the spread of infection.

Pregnancy Disease

There is some difference of opinion as to the cause of this trouble, but there is evidence which supports the theory that the condition is produced by an improper assimilation of carbohydrates. The condition occurs in 10 to 20 days before lambing. As a rule it is found that the affected ewes have been fed on dry feed and have not received sufficient exercise. Invariably the animals are in good flesh and have apparently been kept under excellent conditions.

Symptoms:

The first symptom noted will probably be partial or complete loss of appetite; the ears, if examined, will usually be found cold and clammy. As the condition develops, the animal loses control of its hind legs, then finally lies prone upon the ground, staying in this position for hours, or even for several days. During the course of the disease there is often evidence of nervous movements of the head and ears. Grinding of the teeth is also a well marked symptom.

Treatment:

Our experience has been that treatment, as a rule, is unsatisfactory, but if the disease does make its appearance in a flock, the sheep should be fed green feed if at all possible. If this cannot be done, we suggest dissolving one quart of molasses in ten quarts of water and spreading it over the hay or grain which is being fed to the animals. It is our opinion that in some cases, at least, the trouble can be prevented by following the above method.

We wish to stress the fact that lack of exercise is probably the most important factor in causing this condition, as the disease rarely, or ever, occurs when the ewes are forced to travel a considerable distance for feed each day. Therefore, should the condition make its appearance in a flock, it is necessary to feed the sheep a long distance from the barns or corrals, so that in travelling back and forth for their feed the desired amount of exercise is obtained.

Quite recently some satisfactory results have been obtained through intravenous treatment. However, in all complicated cases it is advisable to consult your local Veterinarian, if there is one in your district, and he should be in a position to make a proper diagnosis and suggest the correct treatment.

Dystocia (Difficult Lambing)

Most difficulties in lambing are due to abnormal presentation of the lamb. A knowledge of how normal lambing takes place is helpful in determining the treatment or assistance required.

Treatment:

Previous to lambing there should be an enlargement of the external opening, sufficient for the lamb to be expelled through the effort of the ewe alone. After a few minutes of straining, the water bag should appear and rupture. After additional straining, the front feet appear with the head between, followed by the body with the hind legs extended. If the lamb is being normally presented, it is only in exceptional cases that it is necessary to give assistance. There may be, however, in the case of large lambs and more particularly with young ewes, times when some help is advisable. When it is reasonably assured that the ewe will be unable to expel her lamb by her own efforts, it is time for the attendant to render assistance. This may be done by pulling on the feet in unison with the straining of the ewe. Unless in extreme cases, excessive force is not advisable on account of the danger of causing internal injury to the ewe.

There may be several forms of abnormal presentation, such as the head and one, or both, of the front feet turned back, coming hind end first, the lamb turned on its back, or twin lambs being presented at the same time. The general practice is, if possible, to correct the position of the lamb. This may be done by first washing the hand and arm with disinfectant, and smearing the hand with vaseline and then working it slowly into the vagina. After the position of the lamb has been corrected, delivery will usually take place without additional help. Difficult cases may arise when it is impossible to get the lamb in the normal position, and under such conditions the best one can do is to obtain delivery with as little injury as possible to the ewe. Lacerations may occur; in such cases external lacerations should be treated with a disinfectant salve or ointment. If internal lacerations have occurred, the uterus and vagina should be flushed with a warm solution of one part Creolin and fifty parts of water.

Eversion of Uterus

This condition is occasionally met with in ewes, usually following a difficult parturition, and where there has been considerable irritation of the parts, after the lamb is born the ewe continues to strain until the uterus is forced out and hangs in a large mass from the vulva.

Treatment:

The displaced uterus should be carefully washed with a warm 2% solution of Carbolic Acid and then carefully pushed into place. The animal will struggle while this is being done, but it must be carefully restrained until the parts are all back in their normal positions. In replacing the everted uterus, the closed fist should be placed beneath the mass, which should gradually be pushed up into the vagina. Sutures through the skin on each side of the vulva, and passing over the opening, will often prevent a recurrence. These stitches should be removed after the animal ceases straining.

Mammitis
(Inflammation of the Udder)

This is an inflammatory disease of the udder and is a common ailment in ewes suckling young. It is especially common in early spring, when the flock has been placed on succulent pasture. As a rule, it occurs only in a mild form, but occasionally it has a gangrenous form, from which there is no recovery.

Symptoms:

In many cases the gland is hard, swollen and tender, often pitting on pressure. There may be loss of appetite, restless-

ness, and pain when the ewe is suckled. The udder may be dark red or purplish in color. The milk secretion is changed and may be either thick, stringy and streaked with blood, or again it may be only a watery fluid. Unless care is taken, the internal structures of the quarter affected may be destroyed. In cases where the milk secretion is stopped, the flow may or may not return at the next period of lactation.

Treatment:

The affected animal should be removed at once from the flock and the lamb taken from her immediately. The udder should be milked frequently and hot applications applied. A treatment highly recommended and popular with many, is the dissolving of ½ a pound of Epsom Salts in a quantity of warm water. The ewe is placed upon her back, and absorbent cotton is dipped in the solution, which is applied to the udder. Beneficial results may also be derived from the application of Camphorated Oil or Iodine treatment, massaged thoroughly into the udder.

EXTERNAL PARASITES

Sheep Scab

This disease is caused by the parasite Psorpotes Communis Ovis, and is one of the most serious diseases known to sheep. As it is classified as contagious, it is desirable that should it make its appearance in a flock, Government officials be notified at once, in order that the affected animals may be quarantined and the disease checked at the earliest possible moment.

Symptoms:

To one accustomed to sheep, the symptoms of scab are not mistakable. Small inflamed areas occur where the mite irritates the skin. Intense itching and the formation of pustules follow rapidly. The wool becomes taggy and commences to fall out. As the infections proceed, the itching increases until the animal appears to be never at rest. It loses its flesh rapidly, the wool falls out, especially along the flanks and back, exposing large areas covered with crusts, and with the accompanying rubbing and scratching, there is no mistaking an outbreak of scab when it occurs.

Treatment:

As explained, this disease is handled by Government regulations. The proper procedure is to isolate all infected animals, and report to the proper authorities, when the animals can be treated with the proper solution under careful supervision.

INTERNAL PARASITES

Grub in the Head

The cause of this disease is the result of the fly Oestrus Ovis depositing larvae in the nostrils of the sheep. It then makes its way up the nose into the sinuses and nasal chambers, where it attaches itself to the mucous membranes. It remains there until fully developed, when it is dislodged by the violent sneezes and snortings of the sheep.

Symptoms:

The infected animal usually runs around with its nose held close to the ground. Later the infected sheep sneezes violently, rolls its head from side to side and exhibits considerable excitement. The eyes become red and watery and the nasal membranes are inflamed.

Treatment:

There is no treatment satisfactory for this trouble. Prevention is the only logical procedure. The smearing of Pine-tar around the nostrils at regular intervals will prevent the trouble to a large extent. Where the fly is prevalent, it is a good plan to apply the tar once a week during the fly season.

Stomach Worm in Sheep

This is one of the most serious ailments affecting young sheep. In certain sections of the United States, serious losses among lambs have resulted from the infection of this parasite. In some sections only of Alberta has it made its appearance. The result of the infection of this parasite is more frequently seen in wet seasons, and animals on low marshy pastures are usually affected. But if the locality has become infected, the disease will be found on high pastures as well.

Symptoms:

The disease usually affects young lambs, and about July or August, the infected animal begins to hang behind the others. It loses flesh rapidly and has a dull, dejected appearance. The wool becomes harsh and rough, and the victim staggers when it walks. A swelling usually appears on the lower jaw and the visible mucous membranes become pale and the skin like parchment. Death may take place in from 2 to 3 weeks, to as many months.

Treatment:

There are a great many treatments recommended for this trouble. The one most commonly used is ½ an ounce of Gasolene and Raw Linseed Oil, added to 4 ounces of fresh cow's milk. This may be repeated for 3 evenings, allowing

food a few hours after the giving of each dose. Recently the administration of a 1% solution of Copper Sulphate has been recommended. To make this solution, dissolve ¼ of a pound of Copper Sulphate in 1 gallon of boiling water. Add cold water to make a total of 3 gallons of the solution. The dose is about 3 ounces for yearlings and older sheep, and ½ as much for lambs 3 months old or older.

MISCELLANEOUS DISEASES

Foot Rot

This disease is quite common in some parts of Alberta, and is usually started in wet weather, the result of sheep having to stand in mud, or being pastured on low lying land.

Symptoms:

There is considerable inflammation and soreness around the coronary band, and a well marked lameness. Following this, there may be separation of the hoof and small gangrenous spots appearing between the claws of the foot.

Treatment:

The foot should be cleaned thoroughly and all clay, sand or dirt must be removed. In the case where abscesses are forming, poultices may be applied. The swellings may afterwards be opened to allow the pus to escape. The foot should be treated with an antiseptic solution, such as a 5% solution of Carbolic Acid, or a 2% compound solution of Cresol. Where a large number of sheep are affected, they may be driven through a trough containing several inches of Copper Sulphate solution. One pound of this drug to a gallon of water is usually quite effective. The application of Balsam of Peru is also an excellent remedy for this trouble. It must be remembered that when this disease occurs, the flock should be removed to clean, dry pasturage at once.

Sore Eyes

Disorders of the eye are not very common in this Province. Inflammations may occur, the result of dust, injuries, and occasionally the pollen of certain flowers. It may appear also in conjunction with diseases, such as Nasal Catarrh and Grub in the Head.

Symptoms:

There is usually a well marked flow of tears and great sensitiveness when the eye is exposed to the light. The discharge is at first watery, but later may become purulent. The mucous membranes of the eye are red and swollen. If the

disease has progressed for some time, the eyeball may become clouded, and in certain instances ulcers will form.

Treatment:

It is necessary to remove all foreign matter from the eye as quickly as possible. The eye should then be washed with a 3% solution of Boracic Acid or a 10 to 20% solution of Argyrol. It is necessary to place the affected animals in a dark place until recovery occurs.

Keratitis

This form of eye trouble has been brought to our attention in only a few instances. On certain farms it assumes an enzootic form and affects several animals in one flock. The first symptoms will probably be a profuse discharge of tears from the eye. The eye-lids become swollen, and as the result of inflammation the eye itself becomes clouded and the animal is temporarily blinded. In bad cases a small red spot may appear near the center of the eye-ball. In some animals both eyes may be affected at the same time. As the result of the inflammation the eye-ball may become clouded or milk-white, and in bad cases it may ulcerate and rupture. In instances such as this, the inner structures of the eye are totally destroyed.

As soon as a case of this trouble is noted it should be isolated from the rest of the flock and placed in a dark shed. A few drops of a solution of Nitrate of Silver, the strength of which should be one to five grains to one ounce of distilled water, should be placed in the eye once a day for several days. The placing in the eye of a 10 to 20% solution of Argyrol is also recommended. In addition, cold applications such as bathing the eye with wads of absorbent cotton saturated with very cold water, will also be beneficial.

Goiter

This disease is quite prevalent in certain sections of Alberta, but is probably more common in the vicinity of the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Lambs from affected flocks usually show an enlargement of the thyroid gland in the region of the throat. Many are born dead, and some are born weak and die within a few days. The cause is attributed to a deficiency of iodine in the food and water. Unless the breeding ewes get a sufficient amount of this drug, serious results follow.

Symptoms:

Enlargement of the thyroid gland, which is situated on both sides of the larynx, is the most common symptom. Lambs thus affected are usually born dead or very weak. Those that

live are often unthrifty and apparently never reach the normal growth.

Treatment:

On farms where this condition is prevalent, goiter can be prevented by the administration of Potassium Iodide daily, for 3 months before lambing. It has been suggested that the dissolving of 4 ounces of Potassium Iodide in as small a quantity of water as possible, and then sprinkling it over 100 pounds of coarse salt, is the most convenient way of administering the drug. On certain sheep farms, Potassium Iodide has been given by dissolving ½ an ounce in the drinking water daily. This is said to be sufficient for 100 ewes. For those lambs born with enlarged thyroid glands, the application of Tincture of Iodine with a soft brush once a day, has been known to reduce them to normal size.

Gravel

(Urinary Calculi)

Rams and wethers suffer from obstruction of the urinary passages with small bodies of material made up of mineral salts that are called calculi. Due to the small calibre of the urethra, serious results follow. This condition is not prevalent in Alberta, but has been brought to our attention as occurring on several premises. As it is frequently due to the extensive feeding of sugar beets or mangels, or where feed rich in lime salts is being fed, it is worthy of some consideration.

Symptoms:

This trouble is extremely difficult to diagnose in the early stages, and probably a careful post-mortem examination is the only sure way of finding out the exact cause. In the way of general symptoms, there will be sudden loss of appetite, colicky pains, well marked restlessness, straining, swelling around the abdomen and distension of the bladder. Death usually takes place quite rapidly.

Treatment:

This as a rule is unsatisfactory. Operations are frequently attempted, but unless done by a skilled surgeon, they only prolong the agony of the animal. Prevention is the only solution to this trouble, and it is suggested that the mixing of a little Sodium Bicarbonate with the food several times a week will largely prevent the trouble. Under the circumstances, it is advisable to withhold sugar beets or mangels from male sheep.

Maggots

Sheep are apparently very susceptible to maggot infestation. Maggots are the larvae stage of a fly, which are found in the vicinity of stables and barnyards. The adult fly deposits the larvae on the surface of the wounds, where the tissues have been injured or torn in some way. They work their way into the skin causing excessive sores, which may result in the death of the animal.

Symptoms:

There is considerable irritation manifested by the animal rubbing the affected part. This area has a lifeless and spongy appearance, and when it is opened the living parasites are quite easily found in the decomposing tissues. This condition occurs only during the hot summer months.

Treatment:

Cleanliness is the first essential in the treatment of this trouble. The wool should be clipped carefully from the vicinity of the wound and the dead or diseased tissues as well as the parasites should be carefully removed. The area should be washed with a solution of Carbolic Acid, one part to 20 parts of water. Many recommend the application of Kerosene, and some Spirits of Turpentine. The latter should not be used on the raw wound as it will cause too much irritation. A mixture of Ether and Sweet Oil is probably one of the most effective remedies that we have. Solutions of Creolin, Kreso or Izal may be used. The prevention of this trouble should be the first consideration, and in cases of injury the application of Pine-tar or equal parts of Lard and Sulphur will prevent the larvae from gaining entrance into the body.

Wounds

This is the separation of living tissue, and in sheep, they are usually caused by attacks from dogs or lacerations made by barbed wire. On account of the fleece of the sheep, hemorrhage as a rule is not excessive, the wool quickly matting and causing coagulation of the blood. In the way of treatment, the parts should be carefully washed with some antiseptic solution and all dirt and foreign substances removed, the edges of the cut drawn together and held in place by either bandages or stitches. Astringent solutions such as Alum or Lead Acetate may be applied. If excessive hemorrhage has not occurred, the parts may be smeared with ordinary Pine-tar.

STOMATITIS

(Sore Mouth)

Stomatitis is an inflammation of the mouth. There are so many different forms of this trouble that space will not allow us to describe each one separately, but the Catarrhal type, or simple redness of the mouth, is the one most frequently seen. If the case is neglected or improperly treated, the tissues will undergo changes that may develop into a most serious condition.

Inflammation of the mouth may occur after injury, by the sharp parts of plants, or of the bearded grains of barley, or the awns of various grasses. Chemical irritants may likewise cause it, particularly such as are applied externally as medicines. Occasionally sheep may drink solutions containing disinfectants and considerable inflammation will result.

The milk of animals suffering from certain diseases may produce inflammation of the mouth of the young lamb. Poisons contained in certain plants as mustard and hemlock, and occasionally fresh clover and insufficiently dried hay, may cause it. It is also claimed that feed infected with various fungus is particularly prone to cause inflammation.

Symptoms

The mouth will be hot, red, sensitive, with the result that the animal will chew its food in a careful and deliberate manner. The thirst is increased. On examination the mucous membrane of the mouth may, in addition to being inflamed, show small yellowish gray ulcers, which generally cast off shreds of false membrane. Occasionally these ulcers extend over the lips and nose. The tongue may swell considerably and the saliva will dribble from the mouth. As a result of the difficulty in taking feed, the animal soon loses flesh and there is a well marked unthrifty appearance. In young lambs the disease is often rapid and fatal, but older animals usually recover.

Treatment.

In most cases, a regulation of diet and the removal of the causative factors are all that is required to bring about a speedy recovery. The diseased sheep should be fed on green feed, fine hay and if necessary, bran or gruel. Affected animals should be separated from healthy ones. Allow plenty of fresh water, as it enables the animal to rinse the mouth of accumulations of material. The mouth should be swabbed out twice a day with a potassium chlorate solution of 1% to 3%, or alum ½% to 2%, or a hydrogen peroxide solution of 3%. A fountain syringe may be used to rinse out the mouth

or a piece of rubber tubing, attached to a metal syringe, will answer the same purpose. Beneficial results may also be obtained by dissolving 2 tablespoonfuls of boracic acid in each pail of drinking water.

POISONS

We usually consider that the losses due to poisons fall into any one of the following three classes: Mineral, Vegetable and Animal.

Mineral Poisoning

It occasionally happens that alkali poisoning causes considerable loss in a flock of sheep. Upon investigation, we generally find that the animals had access to some slough that was badly polluted with this mineral. The animals are always hot and thirsty, and no doubt drank large quantities of the water. The symptoms are colicky pains, enteritis, some frothing at the mouth and nose, followed by bloody diarrhea, collapse and death. The treatment is most unsatisfactory. The administration of large quantities of vinegar, raw eggs, gruel and oily preparations may aid in bringing about recovery.

Sheep Dip Poisoning

Occasionally animals may become poisoned in this manner by swallowing some of the solution or having it pass into the respiratory organs. In these cases treatment is most unsatisfactory, and as a rule death soon takes place. The administration of stimulants such as Aromatic Spirits of Ammonia, Sweet Spirits of Nitre, or Whiskey may give some relief, but usually the animal dies before these have a chance to produce any effect.

Vegetable Poisoning

Under this heading comes poisonous plants, such as Death Camas, Loco, Larkspur and Water Hemlock. Space will not permit us to go into this subject to any extent, but the bulletin, "Weeds Poisonous to Live Stock," prepared by the Provincial Government, and obtainable upon application, covers this ground most fully. The treatment for all plant poisonings is to administer large quantities of stimulants such as Sweet Spirits of Nitre, or Whiskey, along with a mixture of Potassium Permanganate and Aluminum Sulphate, in 10 grains of each. Tannic Acid is also a well known antidote for many vegetable poisons.

Under poisons of this class there is one that should receive particular attention. That is silage or ensilage poisoning. Numerous cases have been reported, especially during the past two years, and there is no question but that if the ensilage

becomes mouldy, the result is one of the most dangerous poisons for sheep that we have. The symptoms come on rapidly, and include violent colic, intense inflammation of the digestive tract, diarrhea, convulsions and death. Treatment is unsatisfactory, and in spite of the antidotes recommended above, very little can be done. Gruels and warm, sweet milk, containing beaten raw eggs, are soothing and nourishing and are worthy of a trial at least.

Animal Poisons

Under this heading would come poisons, the result of snake bites and insect stings of various kinds. The former is seen occasionally in Southern Alberta, and is likely to produce a serious local irritation, and occasional constitutional disturbances. The symptoms of snake bite is a swelling, producing intense local inflammation, accompanied by depression, weakness, feeble pulse, difficult breathing, stupor or convulsions. In the way of treatment, the bitten part should be incised and bleeding encouraged. Potassium Permanganate in a 5% solution may be applied into and around the wound. Stimulants, such as Alcohol, coffee and Aromatic Spirits of Ammonia, should be administered, as there is usually a well marked depression.

Bites from insects such as wasps and bees at times set up severe local irritation. To produce serious general effects, the poisons would have to be introduced into the victim in large quantities, as when an animal is stung by a swarm of bees or wasps. The proper treatment would be to wash the parts with Ammonia solution or Permanganate of Potassium, well diluted, and to give some of the common internal stimulants.

GESTATION TABLE FOR SHEEP

(Based on 146-day period)

The average for 707 gestation periods was between 146 and 147 days

MONTH BRED

Day of Month Bred	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	DATES DUE											
	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.
1	27	27	25	25	24	25	24	25	25	24	27	26
2	28	28	26	26	25	26	25	26	26	25	28	27
3	29	29	27	27	26	27	26	27	27	26	29	28
4	30	30	28	28	27	28	27	28	28	27	30	29
		July										
5	31	1	29	29	28	29	28	29	29	28	31	30
	June									Mar.	Apr.	May
6	1	2	30	30	29	30	29	30	30	1	1	1
7	2	3	31	31	30	31	30	31	31	2	2	2
			Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.			
8	3	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3
9	4	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	4
10	5	6	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	5	5
11	6	7	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	6	6	6
12	7	8	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	7	7	7
13	8	9	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	8	8	8
14	9	10	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	9	9	9
*15	10	11	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	10	*10	10
16	11	12	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	11	11	11
17	12	13	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	12	12	12
18	13	14	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	13	13	13
19	14	15	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	14	14	14
20	15	16	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	15	15	15
21	16	17	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	16	16	16
22	17	18	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	17	17	17
23	18	19	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	18	18	18
24	19	20	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	19	19	19
*25	20	21	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	20	*20	20
26	21	22	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	21	21	21
27	22	23	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	22	22	22
28	23	24	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	23	23	23
29	24		22	22	22	22	22	22	22	24	24	24
30	25		23	23	23	23	23	23	23	25	25	25
31	26		24		24		24	24		26		26

Example: If a ewe were bred on Nov. 15th the date she will be due to lamb may be found by glancing at the figure 15 on the left hand column, headed "Day of month bred," and then following across to the right on this line until the column headed November is reached. The day and month of lambing will be found in this column. For specific example note the months and figures marked (*). **Ewe bred Nov. 15th, due to lamb April 10th.**

Date Due

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